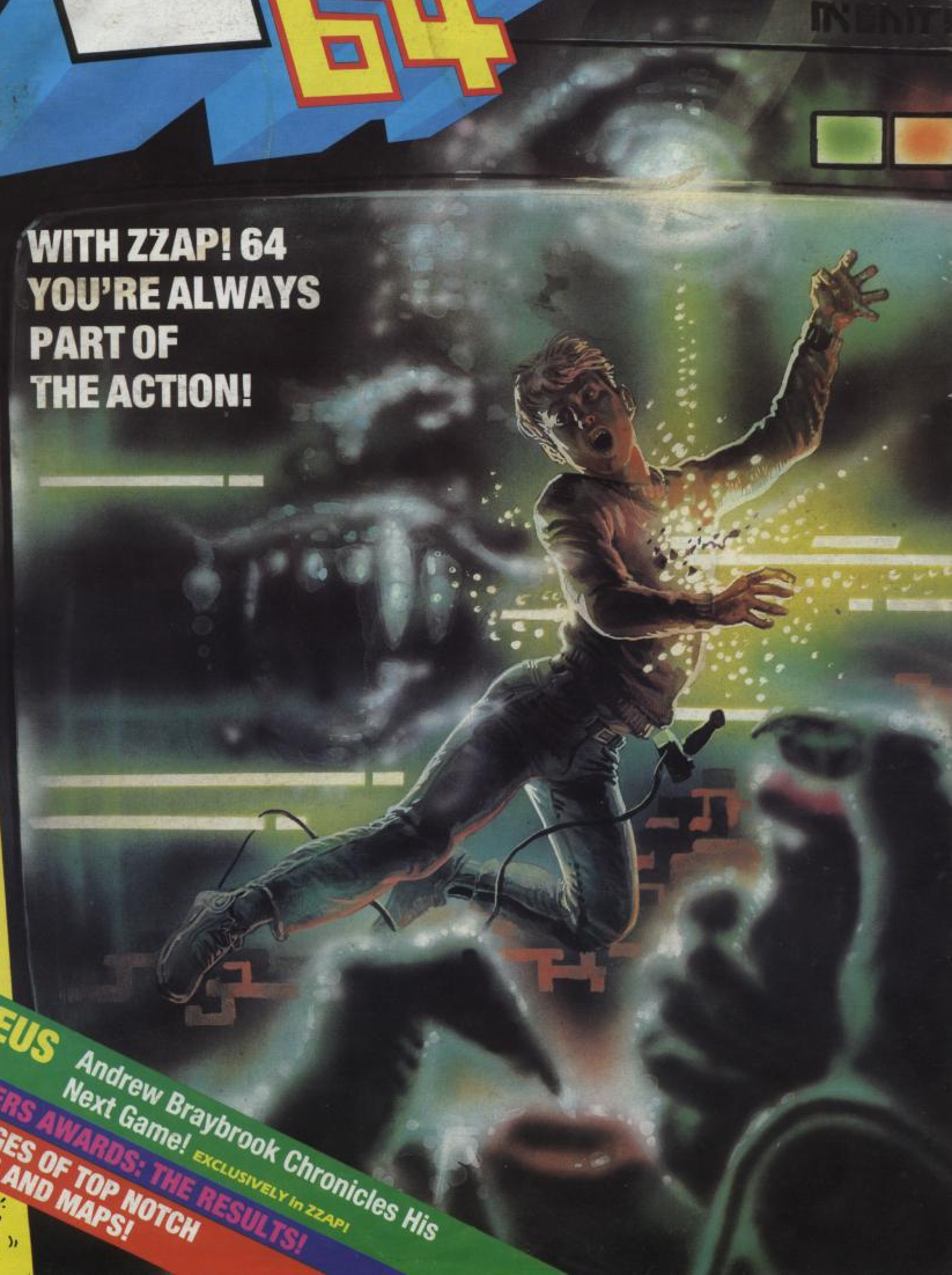
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No.23 MARCH 1987
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MONTHLY REVIEW FOR COMMODORE SOFTWARE



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ZZAP! ED

Shadows of cynicism cast in the light of experience? . . .

Chris Butler, freelance programmer currently producing arcade conversions for Elite:
'I'm quite happy doing arcade conversions, it's dead easy work. You've got a set target to reproduce an exact – or a near exact – copy of a game.'

Chris Yates, Sensible Software:
'It's getting to the stage where there's not much point in coming up with new ideas – things have to have to be the same or they won't sell. A game's got to have a name to it, or it's got to be the same thing in a different package. A big name or tie-in helps regardless of the quality of the game.'
'Is it the kids' fault for actually buying the game because they recognize the name, or is the company's fault for bringing out the the game because the kids want it?'

John Hare, Sensible Software:
'Good presentation is becoming more important than a good game.'

John Gibson, freelance programmer currently working for Ocean:
'If you want to do an original product it's got to be really convincing. I don't really like doing arcade conversions – they're nearly always pale imitations of the original – there hardly seems much point in doing them.'

Roy Gibson, Canvas:
'Licence deals annoy me. We lose directly in proportion to the size of the licence. If you're on a royalties deal publishers screw you substantially. What they say is 'we've got a brilliant licence and are guaranteed 100,000 sales, therefore we'll pay you less royalties because you don't need them.' You ask for a lump sum and they say they haven't got enough money left over because the licence cost so much, so their priorities are 'pay for the licence, then worry about the programming' – so how can the game be any good?'

Steve Cain, ex-Denton Designs:
'The software industry could be generating brilliant characters and licensing them out to films and TV, but look what happens. We end up having to write a game about some crappy American TV series. It's the wrong way round. Licences do take money out of the industry which should be left in.'



Has the quality of games software deteriorated over the years? Or is it simply standing still? There again – did it ever progress?

It all started with the appearance of black and white, hand held video games featuring such delights as 'tennis' and 'football' – simplistic, but playable games with equally simplistic graphics and sound. Families gathered around their televisions, captivated and somewhat overawed by the hi-tech thrill of it all.

Within months, the cartridge-based consoles arrived – notably the Atari 2600 which spawned cheaper, inferior imitations. These consoles offered better graphics and sound, and (more importantly) more variety than their 'predecessors' . . . but at a price – around £40 a cartridge.

Months passed. And then . . . the advent of the home computer boom.

(Sir) Clive Sinclair's DIY ZX80 was the first home computer to make its mark – not as a games machine, but as a break-through in home computer technology. It was the appearance of DIY and ready-made ZX81s that inspired commerical software – cheap, cassette-based games. The ZX81 offered no graphical marvels – it was also slow, devoid of colour and sound, and initially the software available wasn't much of an improvement over the games seen on the ageing black and white hand-held consoles. Clones of arcade games such as *Break Out, Space Invaders, Galaxians*

▷

ADVERTISERS' INDEX

GAMES REVIEWED

ZZAP! ED

and *Pac Man* appeared in abundance and were well received by those either lacking the time and money to frequent amusement arcades, or unable to afford a cartridge-based console. Original games were few and far between – but it didn't matter. The technology impressed, as opposed to the quality of the software. Everyone was happy.

Commodore's VIC 20 brought improved graphics, colour and sound – but it was overshadowed by the release of the Sinclair Spectrum and the BBC Micro. The VIC (apologies to any German readers) suffered due to its comparatively high price – and small memory. Commodore offered some software support in the form of costly ROM cartridges – mostly clones of arcade games. But, despite being unrestricted by the VIC's pitiful 3.5K memory, most of these cartridges offered too little for too much. Potential innovation came with Jeff Minter – undeterred by the VIC's memory restrictions and unperturbed about 'doing his own thing'. But, sadly, his self-indulgence was generally scorned and ignored, and the flow of unoriginal software prevailed.

The somewhat highbrow BBC boasted a larger memory and many unusual, impressive features. It also boasted a high price tag – lower than that of the Atari, but not low enough . . . the Spectrum was considerably cheaper, more user-friendly and sold extremely well, despite reports of unreliable machines and erratic delivery. Games software ensued – predictably, in the form of arcade clones.

These newer machines were powerful, but this advantage only brought about more accurate versions of arcade games – original games were still few and far between.

By this time the full-colour, arcade-quality-sound, ("blah, waffle") Atari home computer had been knocking around for a few years, as any self-respecting Atari owner will no doubt go to great lengths to tell you ("waffle, blah"). However, most Atari software came in the form of Atari's ludicrously expensive ROM cartridges – more often than not mediocre arcade conversions that failed to reflect the capabilities of what was, and still is, a powerful machine. Needless to say, the Atari home computer was largely ignored – its high price put it 'out of reach' for the casual consumer, and there were many cheaper cartridge-based consoles available which offered much the same. Perhaps if more attention had been paid to producing cheaper, original, quality software for the Atari, and if the machine itself had also been significantly cheaper, then original games would have appeared sooner and consequently affected the quality of software today.

The Commodore 64 hit the streets, boasting synthesiser-quality sound, high-resolution graphics and colour. Most importantly, the C64 offered 'sprites' – a feature previously only seen in arcade games, allowing objects on the screen to pass over background without it being erased. But the 64 failed to make a significant impression – until its price dropped and sales boomed, inspiring arcade clones aplenty.

The whole business of writing and marketing computer games has moved forward over the years, and has become a more formally-structured, conventional 'industry' that operates in the field of entertainment. Clones are now known as 'officially licensed conversions' – in a comparatively short period of time the software scene has changed very little, although the methods of production and distribution have 'matured'. But the quality of the products now being shipped hasn't developed in parallel to the machinery that puts games in the shops. To my mind, the software industry is stale. It has been running around in circles like a headless chicken.

At present, there is far too much run-of-the-mill software available – spawned by licensing deals that take the form of television and film tie-ins or arcade conversions. Despite the effort involved in producing such games, I feel that little or no thought goes into actually designing them. Most film and television tie-ins fall into four tried, tested and exhausted categories: shoot 'em up, arcade adventure, beat 'em up and platform game. Sometimes a composite game offered a mix of the four basic styles. All unoriginal and far from innovative. Over 100 licensed conversions and tie-ins have been released to date . . . and to my mind very few tie-ins have been representative of the theme of the 'original' on which they are based. When it comes to arcade conversions, software houses spend money to avoid thought and effort – all they have to do is produce a competent copy of a game that has been tried and tested in the arcades, and in general the arcade game manufacturers have been dressing up old, basic concepts with increasingly sophisticated hardware – more frills than thrills.

The investment required to buy a licence takes a chunk out of the budget for a project, and this, in combination with the fact that a publisher with a licence is assured of a respectable level of sales, means that there's less money and less impetus behind the development of the game itself. Wholesalers, retailers and consumers are probably going to buy a lot of copies of a licenced game – especially if the release is timed to 'circumvent' the deadlines of monthly review magazines. So why bother going to all the trouble and effort of being innovative? Innovation involves risk, and the lower the risk the better the project appears to the commercially-minded publisher.

Take a few recent examples of uninspired tie-ins:

The cartoon series Scooby Doo features a group of bungling kids (and their dog) who continually stumble across crimes and mysteries which they eventually solve by accident. Elite's computer game however, is nothing more than a platform and ladders game with beat 'em up overtones.

Tarzan swings through the jungle, wrestles alligators and lions, chases the bad guys and gets captured by tribes of ignorant natives – but he always manages to escape and save the day by using his animal friends to his advantage. However, the computer game turns out to be a run-of-the-mill arcade adventure that follows an uninspiring course: explore hundreds of screens, find and use objects and beat up a few natives in the process. Sadly, this is hardly representative of Edgar Rice Burroughs' Tarzan. The Jungle Swinger is merely planted in another uninspiring game; another in a long line of formulaic arcade adventures.

Judge Dredd is a character with immense potential for an outstanding computer game. But this potential was not utilised in the slightest – after the game had spent many months in the development stage, I was disgusted to see that Melbourne House had produced nothing more than an unimaginative and glorified platform game, which completely fails to capture the character of Judge Dredd as seen in 2000AD. What is the point of spending money on a licence if you largely ignore the potential effect your investment can have on the content of the game itself?

Highlander is a prime example of a 'stock' game taken off the shelf of ideas and written after a licence has been acquired – with a few minimal changes to the graphics it could have so easily been Star Wars, Robin Hood, or even 2000AD's Slaine. Sure, the film Highlander features sword fighting, but there's a lot more to it. Are the fight sequences suitable or innovative enough material for a computer game? Hardly, as it has been done so many times before. Most television series and films don't provide suitable material for a computer game – so why bother? But tie-ins seem to sell well, as the market statistics show. The real question is: why do people continue to buy poor games that are dressed up with a licence and a neat illustration on the inlay? By now, I would have thought games buyers would have worked out that a tie-in, more often than not, is likely to be an excuse for a poor game. Predictably poor software, that achieves predictably respectable sales . . .

The overall style and content of Jeff Minter's next game is predictable, but only in that it will be a shoot 'em up. The difference is, Jeff always attempts something new – something innovative. The quality of his games hasn't gone downhill – he 'slipped up' with *Mama Llama*, but in many ways it wasn't a decline in quality. Unlike a lot of new games, Minter's output isn't highly derivative of existing product – he is influenced by the games he plays, but only superficially.

The derivative – almost clone-like approach taken by most companies is A Very Bad Thing. Worse still, presentation seems to be having a disproportionate affect on reviewers' and purchasers' opinions of games without them realising. That's not to say all well-presented games are poor, but presentation goes beyond the game itself – advertising, reputation of the company in question and chart position all subconsciously bias an opinion.

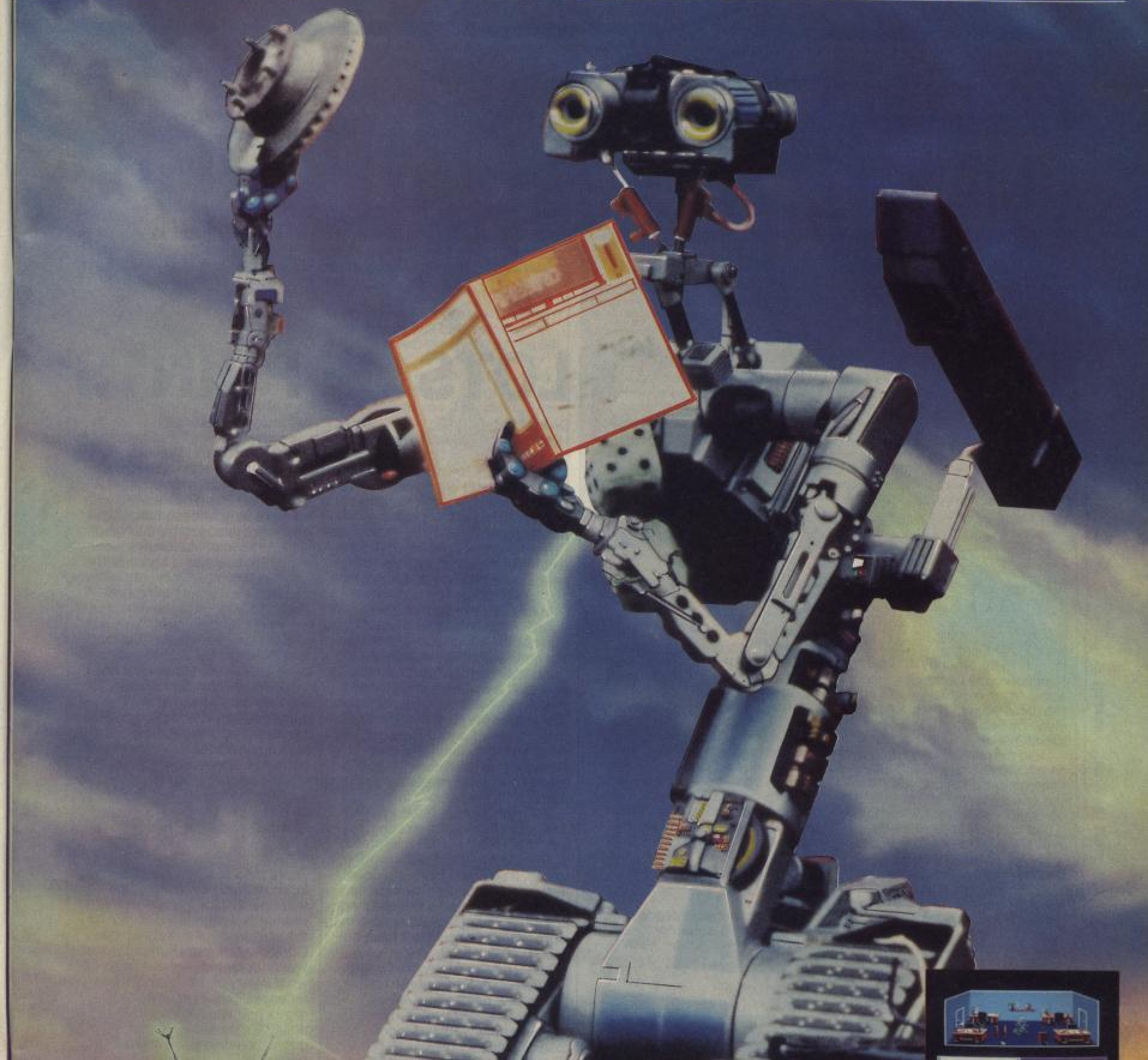
I would like to think that ZZAP! hasn't fallen into this 'presentation trap' – there may well have been a few mistakes, but then even three people offering opinions are occasionally prone to error. It has been suggested by some software houses that we could be out of touch with our readership. This is a possibility – it seems that chart positions (and sales) often conflict with our opinions. But should we be reflecting opinion or guiding it to some extent? Our reviews are intended as guidelines – they should not be taken as gospel, and it is worrying when we hear reports that High Street multiples wait to see the ZZAP! review of a game before deciding on the number of units to order.

But what makes a good game? Does it matter that a game is unoriginal or lacks innovation, as long as those who buy it are content? Are software publishers merely catering for the demand that is there?

There is the odd ray of light. Now and again, someone comes up with an original concept or an original treatment of a theme. The trouble is, within a few months clone upon clone appears, and another 'new genre' is bludgeoned to death, diluted and absorbed by the ideas-starved sponge that the software industry has become.

Unfortunately, software houses will continue to release repackaged versions of the same old thing if that is what the customers appear to want. Is this really what YOU want – or is it all you can get?

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ZZAP! RRAP

It's been a fair old struggle all this wintry month of January to get down the hill to work. It took three days before a snow plough came by and opened up the track from my cottage (thanks, guys, for piling fifteen feet of snow over my entry-way). Living on a hill in this part of the world becomes more like living a computer game every day!

But enough of my problems. What about yours? The central themes in the postbag this month have been *Gauntlet* and an increase in readers receiving poor service from mail order companies – one or two of which I've left out until we've had time to check the complaints out a bit more thoroughly. Anyway, on with the fun . . .

A GREAT REPAIR JOB!

Dear ZZAP!
In reply to the letter by Andrew Sanders in your Christmas Special about repair centres, I would just like to tell you of the service provided by Technicom Services (South West).

I had the misfortune to drop my 64 whilst moving house, causing damage to the keyboard and various chips. I took it to a couple of computer shops who quoted £50 - 70 for repair. I then saw the advert in your magazine for Technicom, and when I phoned them they said that they had a set rate of repair of £27-50 no matter what was wrong.

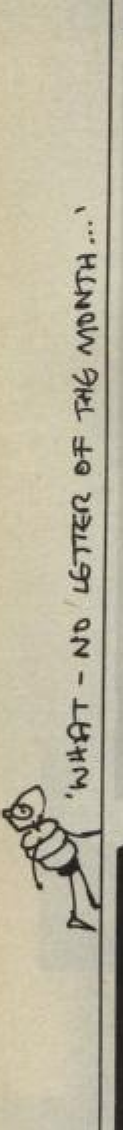
I sent them the machine asking if it could be ready for Christmas, to which they said 'Yes'. Three days later I received a phone call advising that the keyboard was not covered in the price but they would replace missing keys for me at no extra cost, and the machine would be ready within the week – which it was.

The repairs needed were the following: replaced VIC chip, reseated ROM U4, fitted PLA chip, replaced keys, and last but not least it was soak-tested it for 24 hours and given a 90-day guarantee on all new parts.

I hope that this letter will assist any other reader who may be wondering where to send their computer for repair.
Richard Hart, Watchfield, Nr Swindon, Wilts

Great stuff, Richard. Nice to hear from a satisfied customer for a change, and well done Technicom.

LM



A RAGING ROLE-PLAYER WRITES

To Mr Penn,
That's it Penn! I'm fed up to the teeth with you and the rest of your reviewing team, due to your attitude towards role-players.

You and many other 'arcade junkies' with IQ's just reaching double figures have criticised RPG's for far too long. You seem to think that anything that doesn't talk, beep or flash 'Game Over' is second rate rubbish, and you, Penn, even said that a role-playing Sizzler doesn't count. You have ousted the only pensive bloke on the team, Sean Masterson, with perhaps exception of the White Wizard, but insulting our games is too much. Bear in mind that games like AD&D and Traveler are very popular and keep Games Designers Workshop in business. Do they think that they are not real games?

No offence to Lloyd, but I very much doubt this letter will be printed, for not complying with editors views. But take heed Mr Penn, us role-players are seething.

Go on, insult me!
Sam Paget, Uckfield, Sussex on behalf of **Sam Dix, Stephen Biggs, Dale Nicholson** and many other role-players who like computers.

Me, not print your letter, because it might upset the editor?! I'm offended. Go on, Sam, you tell him – accept nothing but the best. Mr Penn's IQ, however, I feel is a matter for himself and his rehabilitation counsellor.
LM

LOTS OF POINTS

Dear Lloyd,
I know you must be sick to death of reading this sort of thing, but, before I begin, I must congratulate the ZZAP! team on producing the best 64 magazine ever to have graced the shelves of many a newsagent.

Now that's out of the way, I have a number of points relevant to keeping up the high standards of your magazine.

In response to your answer to John Simmond's letter is issue 21, I do not think that accounting for the time element in ratings is a good idea, comparisons cannot be made between games when one is older than another, such as *The Way of the Exploding Fist* and *International Karate*. They got 93% and 91% overall respectively, yet, in the review, it was clearly stated that the latter was far superior: a mite confusing.

Still with ratings at the risk of incensing the wraths of rating-haters, may I ask if the 'Overall' rating takes into account the price of the game. If so (and I believe it does), would it be possible to include a rating which reflects the quality of the game rather than its price. (I'm sure *Slamball* would not have collected 96% if it was priced at £9.95. The same goes for *Sentinel* (Americana), *Spellbound*, etc).

Another point about reviews: please always state clearly if a game is unplayable as a one-player game. I bought *Leader Board* expecting a great game – but unless I have a friend with me, it's totally unplayable.

From REVIEWS to PREVIEWS: why aren't there half as many as there USED TO BE? You can't call the ones on *Space Harrier*, *Flash Gordon*, etc, previews (issue 20). Can you remember the good old days when you previewed *LCP*, *Spy Vs Spy II*, and that double page spread on *Mercenary*! They made interesting reading and kept you excited with new games to look forward to.

When there is a month with no Sizzlers or Gold Medals, it's your job to fill the magazine with interesting articles to make up for it. In some issues, this has not been done (eg: issues 12 and 16), but, I'm glad to say that issue 21 (Xmas 1986) did provide some excellent reading. I hope this was not just because it was the 'Christmas Special' and that it will occur in any issue where good games are lacking in future.

Lastly, some points on games; *World Games* and *Spindizzy* are BORING! One play each of these was enough to put me off them for ever more. The latter is simply uninteresting and too hard to get anywhere (also too hard to map), and the former just follows the same Epyx routine. I agree *Summer Games* was excellent because that sort of thing had never been done at the time. I agree *Summer Games II* was out of this world because of the fact that the graphics and sound had been enhanced. However, I don't think that *Winter Games* was worth programming at all. The same goes for *World Games*. Epyx are just chucking the same trash at us again and again with a different name. These are my views. Do other readers agree? If not, I must be getting too old for computer games.
Richard Tatterton, Holgate, York

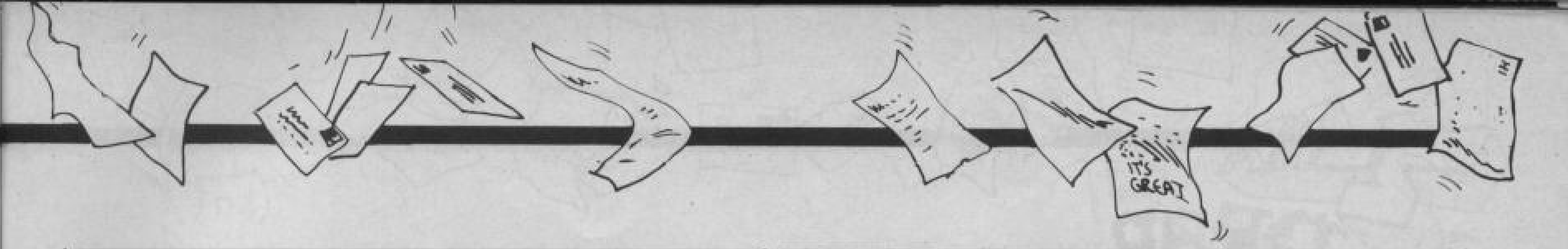
There HAS to be a time element incorporated into ratings. How can we avoid it? Most games written a year or two years ago, are not up the standards of software today. Consider this (purely hypothetical you understand, but relevant): what if Way of the Exploding Fist *received 99% when it was reviewed? We consider* International Karate *to be a superior game, so when we reviewed it a year after* Fist *we could only give IK 100% – perfect! No – a ludicrous situation is it not?*

Absurdly, to reverse the situation, you're asking us to heavily downgrade ratings now, so that there will be room to increase ratings year by year as the standards naturally improve! NO, it has to be the way it is – a rating is given for the present, the moment, after all, at which the game starts to exist, the moment in which we consider its merits.

The Overall rating doesn't take the price into consideration, although occasionally it is affected by the price when reviewing budget titles. We do try to avoid this, but please accept that this 'bias' does happen subconsciously.

As for Leader Board *. . . unplayable as a one player game? Possibly a mite tedious, but far from 'unplayable'.*

LM



DISK ADVICE

Dear Lloyd,
I've had my 64 nearly two years and have been quite satisfied with its performance. I have been offered the chance to buy a 1541 disk drive at a fraction of the normal price but have decided to consult ZZAP! before I buy.

In previous issues of ZZAP! the 1541 has been described as 'slow performance' and 'the terribly sluggish 1541' amongst other things: furthermore in a reply to a letter you said, 'Present day loaders load data from cassette nearly as fast as a disk drive running at normal speed, so the waiting time need not be that much greater'.

Reading this has made me think a bit more about the different types of drives and which one to buy, so I wonder if you could answer a few questions over which I've been pondering.

1) Which of the following drives is superior: 1540, 1541, 1541C, 1550, 1570, 1571?
2) What are the main differences (if any) of the above drives apart from speed?
3) What is the difference between 5¼" and 3¼" disks? Can any kind of drive handle the different disks?
4) How are alignment problems caused in a disk drive?
5) Would you recommend buying a disk drive purely for the quicker loading of games?

Mark Jones, Winton, Manchester

Quite honestly, there are no significant differences between any of the drives you list, as far as the 64 is concerned, and consequently none is superior to any other. They all use 5¼" disks – it's physically impossible to use 3¼" disks. The latter (though irrelevant to the 64) are obviously more convenient because of their size, and they are better protected within a tough plastic shell.

Asking around, no-one's exactly sure what causes alignment problems, other than heavy handling or the single-mindedness of machines to fulfil their duty by going wrong somehow.

However, everyone does know that they would prefer having a disk drive because it's easier and quicker to use than a cassette deck. If it doesn't have many speed advantages these days over cassette loading, it does open up a range of games to you that are normally only available on disk.

LM

I'M IN DEBT!

Dear ZZAP!
I am in a desperate situation. About four months ago I sent away a leaflet allowing me to join the 'The Home Computer Club' in Swindon. As an introductory offer I was to have four cheap games immediately, and then afterwards buy a game every two months for around £1.50 cheaper than in the shops. At the time this seemed a super offer and I was very pleased when my games arrived and they only cost £6 when they were worth £43!

After loading them I decided they were not overly amazing, so I sent them back before the ten-day limit was up. All was fine for a month – my membership was closed and I owed nothing.

Then a month later I received a letter threatening to refer my account to a Debt Collection Agency as I had apparently not sent the games back! If I didn't send them back in 7 days the £43 would be billed to me. I was amazed. I didn't have the games and, being still at school, paying the £43 is quite out of the question.

Unfortunately I didn't send them back Recorded Delivery so there's no proof of posting. I know you learn by your mistakes but this is not my fault so I don't see why I should pay.

Please ZZAP! any advice on saving my money would be highly appreciated.

Carl Waters, Telford, Shropshire

When you sent off for the offer in the first place, you effectively entered a contract to return the games within a specified time limit if you weren't satisfied, and it was your responsibility to get them safely back. If they weren't received (for any reason), then, theoretically, that's your problem and not the Home Computer Club's. It might be something you could take up with the Post Office, but there, as you now realise, without proof of posting, there's little can be done.

However, in practice, most organisations dealing with mail order are aware that such situations occur, and they aren't in business to do you down, so I suggest you contact them by telephone or in writing and explain your point. It may just be that an error was made in Swindon, but you'll never find out if you don't talk to them.

Should the worst come to the worst, I actually doubt whether they will really harass you through a debt collection agency, and if they should, then it's time for your dad to talk to a solicitor. I'm certainly not qualified to advise on that!

LM

CHEATED

Dear Lloyd,
As an avid reader of ZZAP! 64 I thought I had better warn all the other ZZAP! fanatics of a suspect advert advertising commodore peripherals.

I ordered a new 1531 data cassette for £33.95 from Micromail who are based in Manchester. I was slightly suspicious when I found out that the cheque had to be made out to I M Priestly.

I sent off my cheque thinking all was okay as it was advertised in ZZAP! 64, but after four weeks the tape recorder had still not arrived.

When I received my next bank statement I was surprised to find that my cheque had been cashed two weeks beforehand. I then attempted to phone the company and I found that the telephone number didn't exist. I looked for the address to write to them but found that my mum had thrown away that issue of ZZAP! and I couldn't find the advert in any other issue.

So as a hard up student on a Thatcher grant, I would like to either receive my data cassette or my cash. Could you give me the address of Micromail even if you don't print this letter.

Phillip Cain, Scarborough, N Yorks

I have no hard information, Phillip, but our accounts people are of the impression that Micromail, or Celcom as it may also be called, has gone bust. It would seem that they are still cashing cheques, though, and if that is the case, then they are breaking the law. The address (not that I think it will help much) is: 53 Fennel Street, Manchester M4 3DU. Tel: 061 834 5780

LM

VANISHED VIDCOM

Dear ZZAP!
I can't take any more. I've had it up to here (I'm not very tall and 'here' is over my head – in other words I'm swimming in it!) Several things are beginning to get on my nerves and I've got to put pen to paper or . . . well, who knows?

It concerns the new art package from Alpha/Omega (CRL) that was reviewed issue 16, page 44 *Vidcom*.

Where is it I ask myself? As a budding programmer this utility wouldn't go amiss in my software library due to its graphics capabilities. I'm disheartened. I've tried everywhere to purchase this amazing bargain, but not a software retailer has it on the shelves or in stock.

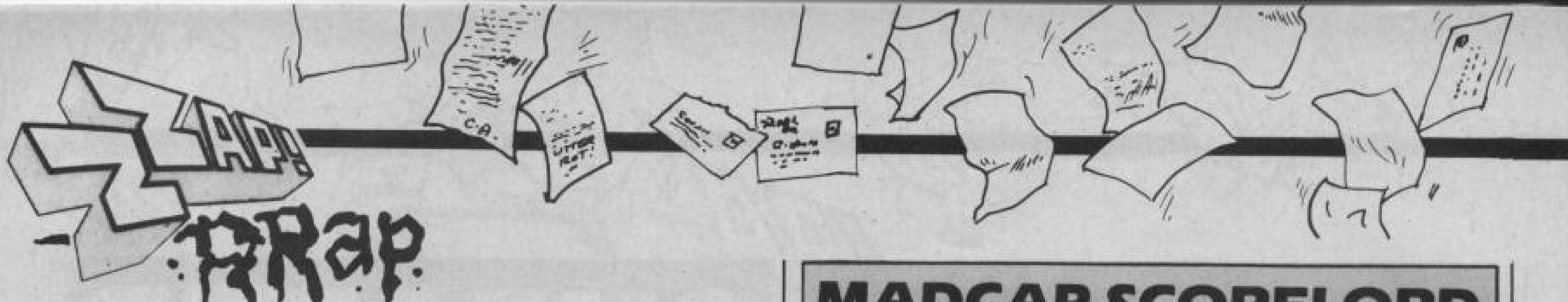
After reading the review I thought, 'great an art package worth buying to use in my own games', but to my dismay nothing more has been said about *Vidcom*. When will it be released, and can you order it?

Spencer Fabion, Lenham, Maidstone, Kent

It has been released some time, Spencer, but Carol says, 'don't despair dear.' I've just checked with her and you can order a copy of Vidcom through ZZAP! Mail Order.

LM





MADCAP SCORELORD

Dear Lloyd,
Firstly I'd just like to say that I would have thought the ZZAP! readership is neither so dense nor so young as to be influenced by the humorous and madcap innuendo of the Scorelord.

No doubt you are now receiving loads of mail griping about the lack of reviews in the Christmas Issue. As far as I'm concerned the Christmas Issue was a marvellous effort by all concerned (the competitions alone were worth the £1.95). The lack of reviews may be a mixed blessing in that it shows the sceptics that ZZAP! is most certainly NOT just a review mag.

Regarding the Electric Dream comp. I would have thought that R Todd's entry should be immediately rejected. The comp was a test of the entrants's imagination and capability to produce a new and exciting ideas for a game. The company offered a big prize which should be owned by someone who put some honest, hard work into his entry. Surely this is common sense. I have, incidentally, no axe to grind as I did not enter the competition.

Finally (cut the sighs of relief) onto the 128. Surely if the 128 becomes significant in the software industry it will earn itself at least one magazine of its very own. The ZZAP! staff no doubt have enough on their hands without the 128.
Adrian Lowery, Clayton-Le-Woods, Lancs

I must be both dense and young then. Thanks for the compliment, and thank you, too, for saying such nice things about the Christmas Special (you've made Gary's day after his wading through those complaints about the lack of reviews). As to R Todd's entry, well I've no axe to grind either, as I wasn't allowed to enter . . .

128 . . . Yes, the lads tell me they do have enough on their plates without 128 – we were considering covering C16 and Plus 4 software, but it's too much extra hassle. However, we will cover 128-only software – if we can get any!
LM

CITY-LESS PITY

Dear Lloyd,
I've just read the Christmas Special and I can not believe my eyes, but it's there, in black and white . . .

Unable to visit the Commodore Show, there was one game I particularly wanted, which a friend who went bought for me. It was *The Bard's Tale*. I read the manual and it says 'use city map, you'll need it' . . . '

Great! . . . But where is it!?

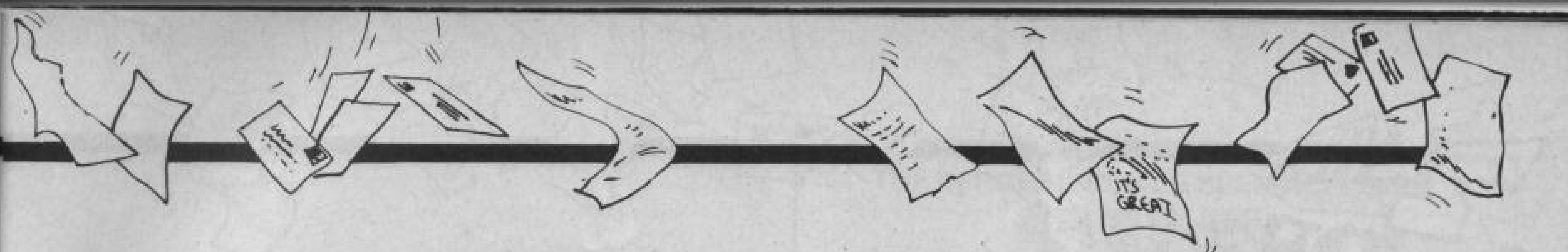
I phoned the company who sold us the game. They said, 'Ah . . . you're the fifth . . . there is no map! . . . because it is an import . . . and we have contacted Ariolasoft and they say there won't be a map.'

Great!? . . . no, I wrote to Ariolasoft and seeing as at the time it was the 'season of good will', they didn't bother to reply! Then I read your test of the game by Sean Masterson, and I quote: 'a map of the city (that proves most useful)'. And that's very true, because it is impossible without the city map, but, where is the city map!?

Now, either I've been done (yes, I know . . . and so I should be!) which means everybody who bought the game has been, or SM has a very good imagination, or worse! So *The Bard's Tale* has been ruined by the cost cutting of a few pence.

Anyway now I've got to grovel . . . please . . . please (pathetic isn't it) can you print a City Map in your mag . . . perhaps SM can help, he has seen it!
K Naunton, Ipswich, Suffolk

Well, Ariolasoft . . . Well . . . ?
LM



CONFUSASTICK

Dear ZZAP!
I recently purchased a new joystick from the Euromax range – the Pro Plus. I chose this joystick for two main reasons:
1) I previously owned a Euromax Competition Pro which had received a well-wicked battering and still stood strong even after hours of play on well known joystick destroyers. That is until recently when it finally went to that great nine-pin, D-type graveyard in the sky.
2) After reading the ZZAPSTICK review about how amazingly brilliant it was and how trendy it looked, I decided it was to be my next joystick.

I arrived at the local computer store and saw it in the window for only £16.95. But when I had a good look at the stick and the box instead of saying 'Professional' on the back of the joystick it had a logo with 'Zipstick' written on it. Also all over the box was written 'Zipstick' and 'The latest product from Zipstick marketing' etc.

After seeing this my mind flashed back to the Euromax advert which read and I quote . . . 'WARNING – cheap imitations of our range are available. Please be careful and insist on our product to ensure full guarantee of satisfaction'.

Well after taking heed of this warning I went up the road and saw the real thing for £19.95 – and by the real thing I mean with 'Euromax' all over the box. So I went in and bought the Euromax joystick.

When I got home I noticed with horror that gracing the back of the joystick was the Zipstick logo. Thinking I had been fobbed off with an imitation I studied the box carefully and on the side, below the address of Euromax, was written 'Manufactured in England by Zipstick marketing'.

After seeing this I came to the conclusion that they were the same joystick. I know that they are not breaking any laws by doing this, and I know the difference is only £3, but I think it can be a bit misleading sometimes. Especially as I have now seen both sticks side by side in a window at different prices. So please Euromax, if you're going to release joysticks under different names at the same time as you release them under your own name please charge the same price or state that it is the same joystick.
Mark Ferry, Dringhouses, York

It sounds as though some strange kind of deal has been struck here, but I agree that it is confusing, perhaps even misleading if, as a manufacturer, you insist purchasers of your product should be wary of buying 'cheap' imitations.
LM

UNRATED SENTINEL

Dear Lloyd,
With regard to Firebird's *The Sentinel* reviewed in December's ZZAP!, it's my opinion that the game should not have been given a Gold Medal award, and it should have been given some ratings.

Here are a few points which I think justify my views.

Firstly, *The Sentinel* is certainly not a game that would appeal to everybody. Julian was right to say that some would love it and some would loathe it, and some (most, I think) would like it because it's such a clever idea. I think it's very good, but not exceptional. Out of three people I know who've played the game, one liked it quite a lot, but didn't think it was earth-shattering (like me), and two thought it was just incredibly boring, although they did admire its cleverness.

If there are people who hate it, does it deserve a Gold Medal? In my opinion it doesn't. Gold Medals should only go to games that are enjoyed by everyone, no matter how good they are technically. Lots of people will think *The Sentinel* is not their cup of tea, just as many as really do like it, so it shouldn't really get a Gold Medal.

Secondly, why were there no ratings? It may be an original idea, but it is a game in a very ordinary sense. Unlike the only other game review I know of that didn't have ratings, ie: *Deus Ex Machina*, *The Sentinel* needs ratings, unlike *Deus Ex Machina* since it wasn't really a game as such, more an album with a computer video. However, *The Sentinel* is an ordinary game in the following aspects:
a) The player controls what goes on on the screen.
b) You can have objects on screen, and it has an effect which relates to what you're doing.
c) You have lives (well, a life) and you can 'die'.
d) There are adversaries controlled by the computer that can defeat you; a feature of just about every game.
e) The game has an objective (all games have an objective, even if it is just to kill more aliens or eat more dots, collect more objects, get a higher score or whatever. Even *Space Invaders* had an objective, but *Deus Ex Machina* didn't).
f) Gaming skill is needed to reach goals.

Having all these features in common with other games, how can it defy rating? To say that it wasn't rated because it is totally original is a cop out – *Mercenary*, *Frankie Goes to Hollywood*, *Scarabaeus* and *Hacker* were all original, but they still got ratings, so why not *The Sentinel*? Now don't get me wrong – the reviewers' comments are, and will always be the most important part of a review, but ratings are useful since they provide a reasonably accurate summary of what has been said in the comments, and in a lot of cases the short comments in the ratings boxes provide information which has not been stated in the main body of the review.

So, to remedy this small fault, I have produced my own ratings for a *Sentinel* Sizzler:

PRESENTATION 98%
Can't fault it. Superb title screen by Bob Stevenson, good, precise instructions, quit option, good key layout, pause mode and an option to start on any level, providing you have the code. Very comprehensive – excellent.

GRAPHICS 85%
Fairly simple but highly effective 3D. Scrolling is too slow (especially if you need to turn in a hurry, although you can U-turn with a single key press). Colouring okay, but would be better if it changed on each level.

SOUND 60%
Simple spot FX and a couple of short, uninteresting jingles, but fairly atmospheric and certainly serves its purpose. Volume can be decreased/increased to taste.

HOOKABILITY 70%
Initially very confusing, but not frustrating, it just takes time to learn what to do and when to do it . . .

LASTABILITY 99%
. . . but once you learn this, you've got 10,000 level to practise your skills on!

VALUE 95%
Would be good value at £15 and at a tenner for such a massive game, it's a steal: AND it's the only game of its type.

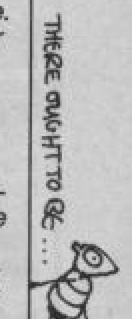
OVERALL 94%
Superb concept, highly imaginative and well programmed, BUT it's an acquired taste, so try before you buy, because you might hate it!

So do you think my ratings and comments are fair? I'd be very interested to know.
Craig Machin, Clayton, Staffs

I have to say, in all fairness, that I'm a voice in the wilderness on this one, Craig. Actually I agree – not rating The Sentinel *was a bit of a cop out (although two years ago I was party to not rating the Spectrum release of* Sabre Wulf *in CRASH, but that was because it arrived the day we went to press and all we could get was a good impression of its merits). Gary Penn, however, reckons for the defence that* Deus Ex Machina *does have an objective – to achieve perfection. In fact, most of the categories you state apply to* Deus Ex Machina.

He goes on, 'The Sentinel *is in a class of its own, as you so rightly state. But is it fair to rate this unique game against existing software? We didn't think so – so we didn't. The Gold Medal award is given to state-of-the-art software worthy of anybody's attention.* The Sentinel *may not appeal to all tastes – agreed. But then, everything in life is down to personal tastes.* The Sentinel *IS state-of-the-art software, and thus it deserves the Gold Medal.'*

That's Gary's view – back to me. Where I disagree with you is your explanation of why it shouldn't have been a Gold Medal. As reviewers we can only go by our own feelings, and those were unusually high in favour of the game – only Julian felt some misgivings, and in fairness those were shown. On the other hand, he didn't feel strongly enough to prevent letting the other three make it a Gold Medal.
LM





ZZAP! RRAP

RUNNING THE GAUNTLET

Dear Lloyd,
Several weeks ago, just before Christmas, I forked out £15 for the disk version of *Gauntlet*. Having been programmed by Gremlin Graphics, I expected the game to be devoid of most bugs and glitches, but it was not . . .

. . . begins **Mark Dayer** *from Littleton-on-Severn, Bristol, who, among others, has spotted some alarming special features in US Gold's* Gauntlet. *He goes on to say . . .*

The worst is that players can walk off the screen, reappearing on the opposite side, unable to fire or be affected by any objects.

Another reader, **Marc Henry** *from Pinner, Middlesex, was equally startled when . . .*

Thyra held off the Grunts while Thor ran ahead and destroyed the generator with a well aimed shot. He ran ahead to the next pack of ghosts leaving to Thyra mop up the last remaining Grunts. No sooner had Thor reached the top of the screen, Thyra being at the bottom, when he disappeared into thin air.
Magic? No, the more familiar, many legged scourge of computer games was at work. *Gauntlet* has one hell of a bug. In two player mode, I found this happening frequently.

Marc Henry, not one to sit on a bug for long, hasn't suffered too badly in the past from software houses . . .

Remembering my *Gyroscope* experience and the helpfulness of Melbourne House, I rang up US Gold. 'No', said the man. 'It's not a bug, it's deliberate,' he said, explaining how it was a 'wrap-round' feature, and in fact the missing man would appear, but the walls, etc, would not affect him – he being one screen 'ahead', and he would seem to stop dead when he ran into the walls and obstacles on the screen he was actually on.
'Oh' I said, half understanding . . .

While Marc Henry from Pinner was busy hounding US Gold, back in Littleton Mark Dayer had worked some of this out for himself . . .

Walking back onto the screen, however, is more difficult. After a time I discovered that by moving off the screen from where you entered can sometimes make the character reappear where he originally went off. Unfortunately, this doesn't always work. In the situation where it does not, it's best to wait until the walls turn to exits and get one character off the screen. It's then much easier to 'find' the other character, and guide him to an exit.

Meanwhile, a half-understanding Marc had returned to his computer in Pinner and . . .

I reloaded *Gauntlet*. Sure enough, when the man disappeared, he eventually came back on and was affected by the walls on the part of the level he was really on – but then I found that both players just froze. Solid. And I either had to reload or wait a few hours until my health drained away.

That's not very nice, Marc. What did you do next?

Got back on the US Gold hotline. This time I was told that it was probably a bad disk and that I should get it replaced. But oh no, not from them, from the shop I bought it from. They would have nothing to do with it.
Is this right? After all, it isn't my dealers fault. But he's the one who's got to deal with it and presumably with other irate *Gauntlet* owners, while US Gold sit back and ignore it.

True, Marc, but the usual procedure is for the purchaser to deal with the shop –

Ah, but Melbourne House were very good over the *Gyroscope* problem, and any other time I've had a problem with a game I've always got help from the manufacturer. So what is it with US Gold? Are they so big now that they just don't care? Well if that's so, I hope they sink. Suffice to say that *Gauntlet* will be the last US Gold game I ever buy (unless there are any more Epyx sport sims) . . .

So Marc Henry (age 13) from Pinner is a bit fed up over that, but poor **Douglas Bayliss** *from Stirchley, near Telford in Shropshire nearly died of terminal frustration . . .*

I purchased a copy of *Gauntlet* after playing the arcade version in my local ice rink, but boy, have I regretted it . . .

What seems to be the problem, Doug?

My friend and I both played and fought it out in a two-player game, me on the wizard and my friend on Thor. Then came the trouble: at about level 60-65 the cassette ran out of tape whilst loading one of the higher levels . . . !

Gasp, that must have been just dreadful!

Well, you can imagine what we were like, we were fuming after all our hard work. The game in itself is brill – ace graphics, good sound and fantastic playability. Please could you tell me where I could obtain a good working copy?

Well Douglas, like Marc Henry, you could check out with US Gold what kind of special effect this particular one is . . . At least you got to do some furious playing, unlike **Harish V Patel** *from Willesden Green, London NW2. He . . .*

. . . recently purchased a copy of *Gauntlet* via mail order after spending wads of cash on the arcade version. After receiving it I eagerly loaded it only to be faced with a big disappointment, it wouldn't load the mazes.
I thought that my copy was full of bugs . . .

Not the only one, Harish. Back to that erstwhile bug investigator, Mark Dayer from Littleton-on-Severn . . .

Other bugs include no extra shot speed (150 levels, no potion), poisoned food is practically indistinguishable (please can someone tell me the difference!), and even when eaten it sometimes has no effect. Sometimes one player adopts the characteristics of another – it has been known for Thor to have Merlin's magic power and shot inability, and vice versa. And what happened to the bonus at the end of the treasure room? Is it ever added on? Why do potions randomly disappear, both special ones and normal?

Harish still hasn't seen any of these excitements because . . .

I got a replacement only to find that I was still stuck with the same problem – I used a different C2N with no luck. I then tried the copy on a different Commodore only to find that it loaded perfectly. By now you may have noticed that in your Christmas issue, there was a letter written by Andrew Sanders who had a similar problem as mine which led him to think that his computer was malfunctioning.

Have you suffered this complain before, Harish?

Gauntlet isn't the first game to fail to load properly, even though my Commodore works perfectly. I have the same problem with *Ghosts 'n' Goblins* as Andrew Sanders and another game, *Who Dares Wins II*. All my other software works perfectly.

Perhaps your Commodore simply hates arcade conversions. Maybe you should try some meaty role-playing games for a change. But hang on, Harish has a theory . . .

Is it something to do with when it was built? I read in a certain magazine that one of their readers had a similar problem with *Ghosts 'n' Goblins*. The magazine's answer was that not all the Commodores are perfect and that some are slightly different, so games that aren't written perfectly won't work very well on them.

Sounds an unlikely story to me. Either a machine is in perfect working order, or it isn't.

Well, if it is that I have one of these different Commodores, then I think it is absolutely ridiculous that some of the Commodores aren't 100% compatible with some of the existing software available. If someone buys a computer then they expect it to work exactly as the other models do.

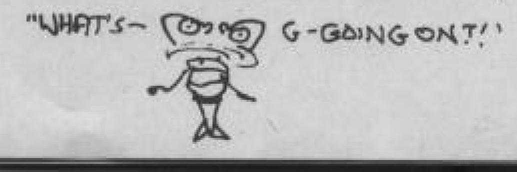
Of course they do. Still, in the circumstances, you could probably get a refund on the non-loading software, could you not?

I was fortunate enough to get a refund on *Who Dares Wins II* but not so fortunate with the other two.

Because the non-loading was also a special feature perhaps? Still, it probably would be sensible to get your Commodore checked out. Sorry, Harish, what was that . . . ?

If Commodore happen to see this letter then I ask, can we owners who have such problems with their micro's, get them exchanged for ones that work 100% with the software available.

I have a sneaking feeling Commodore won't be reading this, but if US Gold or Gremlin Graphics are, I'll leave the last words to that doughty



investigator, Mark Dayer . . .

Gameplay needs to be tidied up as well. The game is far too easy. On one occasion my friend and I played the game for over eight hours. Our health was way over 8,000 (be careful not to get to ten thousand it puts you back to zero-health), and we had both amassed scores of over one million (the scores also clock on to zero).

Gauntlet is a great idea, everything is there, but with all the bugs and glitches, coupled with the bad gameplay it becomes a second rate game. I would like to see them spending a couple of weeks tidying it up, and releasing an updated version, rather than creating a whole new set of dungeons. What a disappointment.

RULE: Always see what ZZAP! says about a game before buying it.
Mark Dayer, Littleton-on-Severn, Bristol

OZONE SLAYER

Dear Lloyd,
I ask myself, does Gazza Penn realise what he is doing to our atmosphere? When he liberally applies his Boots economy hairspray he cannot know what he is doing to the ozone layer of our atmosphere. The gasses in the aerosols damage it don't ya know.

Along with this there is the new danger of – no not acid rain – Lacquer Rain. The public must be warned of the danger to their hair, and spikey trees may occur as well.

The solution is USE MOUSSE OR GEL, heed my warning.
Ian Langdon, Church Fenton, N Yorks

Gazza's only too well aware of the damage he's causing, but it's not entirely his fault you see. He tried borrowing a compressor and airbrush from the art department, but the lacquer clogs up their nozzles and makes them furious. Besides, the power of the airbrush results in a style more like Jazza than Gazza, you know, that 'Gosh I've just seen a ghost that sprayed me with hair lacquer' look.

LM

MISLEADING

Dear Lloyd,
I feel I must complain, and warn other readers about misleading adverts. I am referring in particular to Ariolasoft and their *Marble Madness* advert. On the advert it says: *'Nearly all the features of the original Arcade game . . .* ' Gary Penn ZZAP! 64.

In *marble Madness* review, Gary actually says:
'Nearly all the features of the original arcade game . . . but they weren't executed very well.'

The game went on to get Overall 40%

The Advert also has impressive screenshots . . . but in small print at the bottom it says 'Screens from Amiga'. This, in my opinion, is bending the truth to lure people into buying their games.

Can't anything be done about it?

I feel I must also complain about Andrew Sanders, who wrote complaining about computer firms who were conning people. He complained about it and then said, 'I came across a computer repair centre (who shall remain nameless).'

What a stupid thing to do! Thanks a lot, Andrew, it wouldn't have harmed you to tell us who was conning us so that we could look out for them.

Also, can I express my annoyance at people who write in and say 'These people who get really high scores on games like *Commando* etc, cheats because the score counter resets'.

Haven't these idiots enough common sense to add it on because there isn't enough room for one more digit or is it too much for them.
Ged Keaveney, Shelley, Huddersfield, W Yorks

Yes, it may seem a bit naughty quoting part of a reviewer's comment, but whether you like it or not, Ged, it's been going on as long as people have been selling things, which isn't to say that I approve of it. However, they're not really bending the truth by putting Amiga screen shots on the packaging if they do tell you their source. Again, it's fair game to entice you by giving you the best possible appearance. How many times have you looked at one of those wayside Ginormous Gnosher illustrated menus – and how often has the actual plate resembled the wonderful picture of the dish? I would think it better, and in the end more effective, of Ariolasoft to have used Commodore screens on their packaging though.

As to 'nameless' firms who may be conning someone, people are supposed to be innocent until proven guilty, and the unsolicited words of one reader don't add up to proof. And if Andrew had given the company's name, I would have removed it unless I had checked out his information first and found it substantially correct.

LM

ZZAP! TEST

DOUBLE TAKE

Ocean, £8.95 cass, joystick only

Our stable universe has a parallel which is unstable and evil. The ruler of this universe is Sumink, a dastardly figure who has been biding his time, carefully waiting for the moment when he can cross the dimensional divide and invade our own world. Now the chance has come. A laboratory student's experiment has damaged the space/time continuum, throwing the two universes into a state of chaos, and creating gateways which allow objects and people to pass from one to the other.

The laboratory where the experiment took place has sixteen rooms, along with a huge particle accelerator tunnel. Because of the chain of events it has become linked to an identical laboratory in Sumink's parallel universe. Objects from our universe have been sucked through this tunnel, changing places with identical objects from the mirror-universe – the only way order can be restored is by returning the objects to their rightful positions.

The player controls the student, armed with a gun to protect himself from the energy-sapping monsters which have been brought into existence by the clash of the universes. These monsters can be shot, but more quickly spring up to take their place. A touch from one of these monsters has a damaging effect on the student's energy, and constant contact eventually kills him.

Every so often the two universes interchange. When this happens the main screen disintegrates and reforms. A pointer on the display panel shows which universe the student is currently exploring – our universe is represented by a plus sign, while a minus sign indicates the nasty one. When a shift in the universes is imminent, the pointer slides along a scale between these two symbols.

Whenever the student enters a room, an electron appears in the display panel at the bottom right of the screen. If both rooms in each universe are stable, the electron is green – red indicates that both are unstable, and blue that one is stable and the other isn't.

Only one object can be carried at a time, and it is shown in the status area with its stability indicated by a colour code, ranging from magenta through to white. Stability can be changed in two ways: shooting enough monsters or touching a sparkling cloud that drifts around the playing area. These clouds also act as doors between the two worlds.

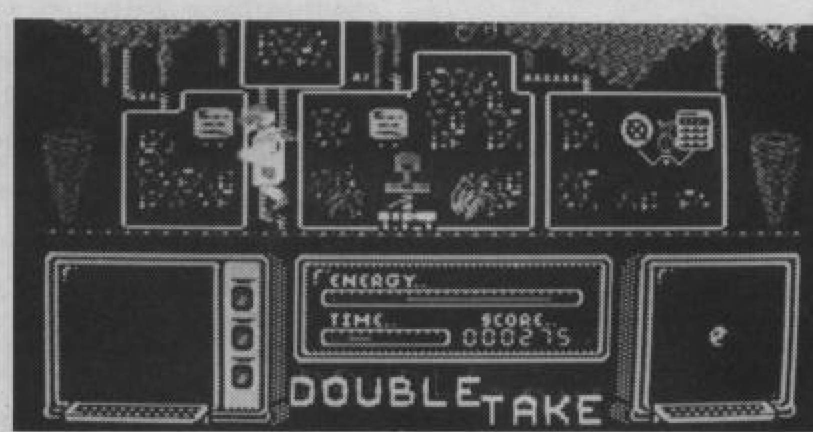
Once everything is put right, a final deadly confrontation between the student and Sumink takes place – and there can be only one victor . . .



I certainly don't dislike Double Take, but then I can't really admit to being at all enthused by it either. It's just so . . . average. It's a shame the graphics, sound and playability aren't as strong as the plot. If that was the case, this would be something really special. But, as it stands, it's an instantly forgettable program, which offers little in the way of challenge and addiction. I wouldn't recommend it to even the most desperate of arcade adventurers.



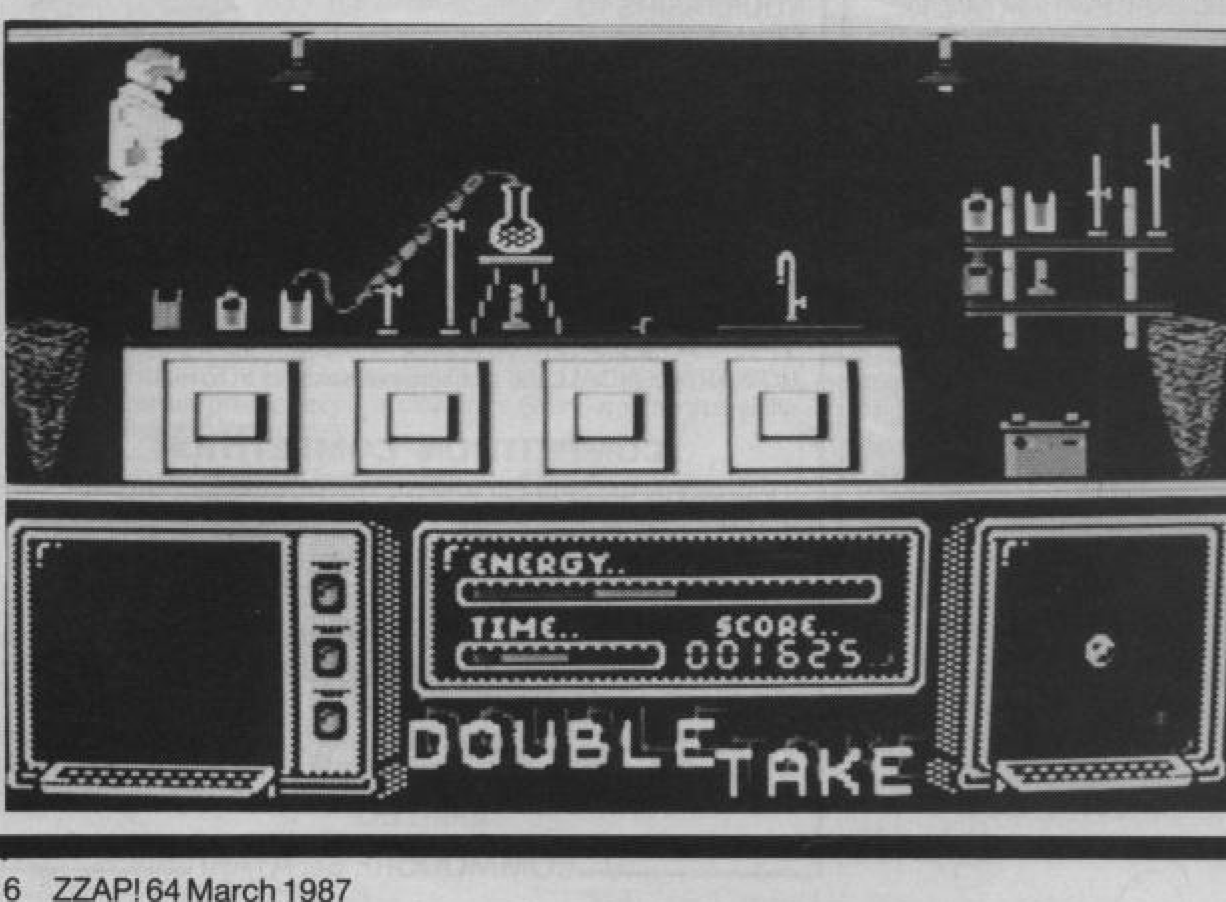
What a brilliant concept. Double Take **has been well thought out, and obviously someone has spent a lot of time coming up with the excellent scenario. Unfortunately it is slow, and due to this it is tedious to play. The graphics are very good – there are a large number of nicely animated sprites on screen, and the statics are well drawn. The sound is also above average – the title music is fairly good, and the effects during the game are simple but effective.** Double Take **is well presented but annoying to play – I wouldn't wish it on any games player.**







This is yet another program floundering helplessly in the endless sea of mediocre arcade adventures. All that saves it from instant obscurity is its excellent scenario – but who wants to purchase a program just for its wonderful story? The strictly average graphics and sound completely fail to impress, and the incredibly sluggish gameplay only adds frustration and annoyance to the already unexciting gameplay. If it's a decent arcade adventure you want then shop around – there are plenty available which offer much, much more.



PRESENTATION 78%
Well written instructions, adequate title screen, and functional display.

GRAPHICS 53%
Colourful, but lacking depth.

SOUND 51%
A couple of tunes which fail to make any impact.

HOOKABILITY 52%
Straightforward arcade adventuring, but not very exciting.

LASTABILITY 41%
Unrewarding and predictable gameplay.

VALUE 45%
Little in the way of fun for nine quid.

OVERALL 48%
Another in an endless line of average arcade adventures.

CHAMELEON

Electric Dreams, £9.99 cass, £14.99 disk

Next time your house gets washed away by a flood, or a landslide demolishes a sizable part of the neighbourhood, don't go blaming God or the public spending cuts – it could be that someone has been messing around with the elements.

In *Chameleon*, someone *has* been messing around with the elements – and things have got to be put right again. Only the Chameleon, made as he is from flux, can



Chameleon **is very rewarding if you can be bothered to persevere. At first this may seem like a lot of trouble – but believe me, it's worth it. I get the impression that Electric Dreams have misunderstood or misinterpreted the programmer's instructions – the inlay is a joke, and a very confusing one at that. It takes time to understand what's going on and how to progress – which is why it would be so easy to slag** Chameleon **off. This is unfortunate, as Electric Dreams have a superb game here which is heavily let down by poor documentation. Still, this review may offer some help . . .**

venture into the realm of Limbo and sort out the elements. But first, he has to pass through four realms – those of the elements Fire, Earth, Water and Air.

Chameleon visits the realm of each element in turn, attempting to locate a hidden exit point which allows him to escape and progress. The landscape scrolls left or right, following Chameleon as he explores. Deadly elementals float in the sky, and demons move along the ground, attempting to drain Chameleon's energy. To defend himself, Chameleon can jump or duck, or fire missiles at the elements and demons by pressing the fire button and moving the joystick in the appropriate direction. However, to destroy the marauding elements and demons, the correct form of missile has to be used. Holding the fire button and moving the joystick down three times summons the four elements, allowing Chameleon to change his missiles into a different form. Energy is also lost by step-



ping into one of the pools on the landscape, or through firing missiles. Fortunately, his energy level can be topped up by shooting a demon with the correct missile, and collecting the power left behind.

If the location of the hidden exit is passed, a tell-tale ditty plays. However, if the Chameleon is to progress to the next level, he must first 'prime' a power point (represented by a stick in the ground) at a particular time of day. There are four separate times, with the current time indicated by the col-



our of the sky. On the first level, the Realm of Fire, Chameleon doesn't need to activate a power point – he can simply find the exit. On later levels though, Chameleon has to pass one, two and three power points before the exit becomes primed.

When Chameleon has activated the exit, he has to dispose of enough demons to allow him to



Initially this looks like a right load of rubbish, but if you sit down and use your brain instead of your joystick it soon becomes apparent that it's pretty neat. The instructions don't offer much in the way of help, leaving the player to work out what's going on, but that's part of the fun of playing it. The graphics aren't exactly stunning, but they are crisp and contain some very pretty effects. The sound is neat too, with some excellent spot effects interacting with the action to give clues as to what's going on. If you want an original shoot 'em up which requires a fair bit of playing until it's 'sussed', then give this a go – it's a very enjoyable experience.

leave. Four element indicator bars are situated at the bottom of the screen, and shooting demons reduces each one respectively. However, a demon must be shot with the correct element, otherwise the shot either mutates it into another element or has no effect. For example, shooting Fire flux at an earth demon turns it into fire, which can then be destroyed by shooting it again.

After completing the fourth level, the Realm of Water, Chameleon passes into the limbo realm. Here, there are no demons – so the only way to escape is by quickly finding the power points and exit, then shooting elementals.



First things first, disregard the inlay – most of it's waffle, and the 'how to play' section is totally unclear. But once you've worked out what everything does, this game is pretty good. Fast thinking, quick reactions and quite a bit of 'strategy' are called for. The spot effects are excellent and really help you to play the game. The screen scroll is accomplished well, comprising several layers of parallax. The plot is bizarre, but works rather well – as long as you're patient and prepared to sit down and work things out.

Chameleon gets three days to complete each realm, scoring a bonus at the end of the level, depending on the number of days left. An extra life is obtained every 10,000 points.



PRESENTATION 84%
Incomprehensible instructions, but good in-game presentation.

GRAPHICS 81%
Crisp, colourful and imaginative sprites and backdrops.

SOUND 83%
Reasonable tune, but neat spot FX.

HOOKABILITY 76%
Initially confusing due to the uninformative instructions, but playable nevertheless.

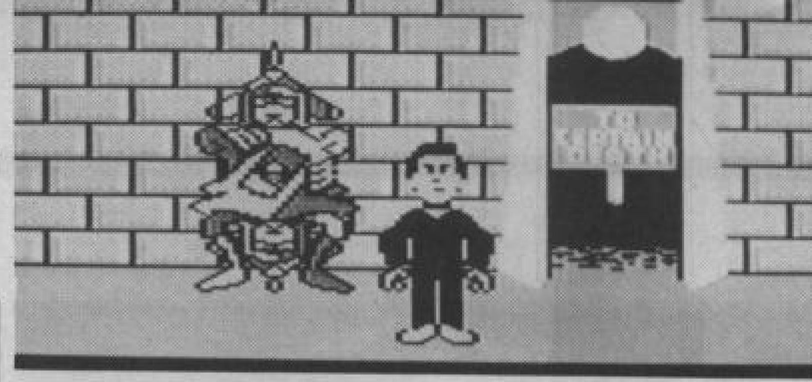
LASTABILITY 84%
The action is addictive and rewarding – once you get to grips with it.

VALUE 77%
A mite expensive, but worthy of consideration.

OVERALL 84%
An unusual, imaginative, and surprisingly compulsive shoot 'em up.

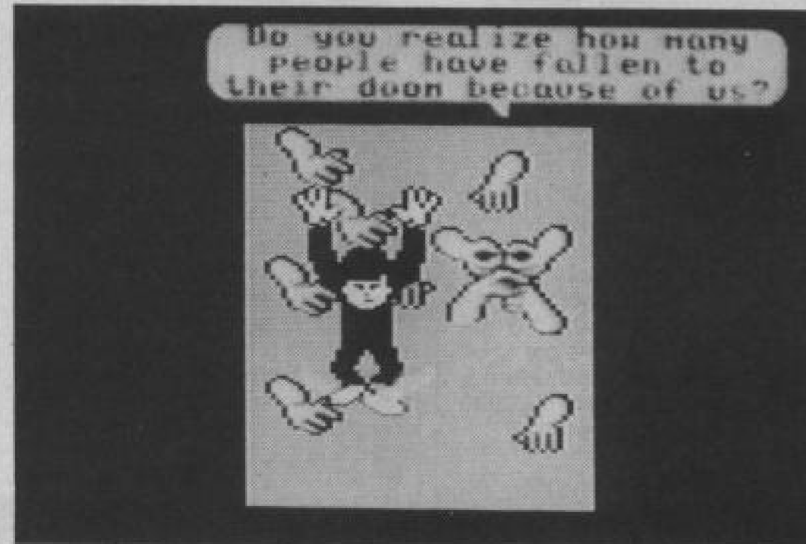


ZZAP! TEST



LABYRINTH

Lucasfilm/Activision, £9.99 cass, £14.99 disk, joystick with keys



There you were, sitting in the back row of the movies on a Saturday night, looking forward to a pleasant evening of escape from your own humdrum world into the fantasy and excitement of a new film. But little did you know that tonight really *was* going to be an escape from the real world . . .

The film started, and the face of Jareth, the Goblin King, appeared. Suddenly the fantasy became reality . . . Jareth picked you out from the other cinema-goers, and



Whilst superficially very flashy, there really isn't much to Labyrinth. **I should imagine that tape users would get very frustrated reloading the game every time they made a mistake. The animation of the large central character is smooth – he (or she) is one of the first game stars who doesn't appear to have come straight from the ministry of silly walks. Arcade freaks will soon get bored with the fairly slow pace though, and adventure fans are going to be unimpressed with the limited amount of (fairly simple) problem solving. Lucasfilm have done a lot of good things in the past, so it's a pity to see them not make the grade this time.**



To start off with, I got a good six hours worth of entertainment out of this. Some of the situations are amusing, and some of the problems are simple but fun to solve – I became so engrossed that I virtually completed it at one marathon sitting . . . but after that I got bored, and was stuck outside the Goblin's Castle, throwing rocks for what seemed like forever. The characters are superb, large and well animated – but then so they should be as each section is loaded individually . . . Which makes me wonder why Activision bothered to put Labyrinth **onto cassette – the disk version is slow enough. Recommended though – if you have no objections to paying fifteen quid for a few hours of solid entertainment.**

told you that he had stolen your soul. The only way to get it back is to destroy Jareth in his lair at the centre of the Labyrinth. But if you don't do so within 13 hours, you become his servant, doomed to wander the corridors of the maze forever.

The first part of *Labyrinth* is a text adventure, in which all commands are entered by means of two text lists at the bottom of the screen. One list contains verbs, the other objects. Words are selected from these lists by using the cursor keys to scroll through them. When a command has been selected, pressing RETURN inputs the phrase, and a response is given.

On completing the text adventure, the second part is loaded. Here, the action changes to that of a joystick-controlled arcade adventure. The character under your control is either a boy or a girl, depending on whether you input your sex as male or female at the beginning of the game.

A radar is situated at the bottom of the screen and shows the position of exits, inanimate and moving objects or creatures – mainly Jareth's goblin guards. Running into a goblin results in a trapdoor opening beneath your feet, and you fall into a dungeon where precious time is lost trying to escape.

The lists of text are retained, and are used throughout to pick up objects and to help solve problems. In all, 22 sections have to be completed before Jareth can be overthrown and your soul reclaimed – and time is short.



This is a real disappointment after such Lucasfilm classics as Ballblazer **and** Fractalus. Labyrinth **is basically a simple arcade adventure which, although fairly original, doesn't really offer much in the way of excitement. Progress through the Labyrinth is quite slow, and I found myself getting frustrated with the character's lazy pace – there seems to be too much time spent walking around, and not enough action. The graphics and sound are competent, but it simply isn't difficult enough to keep you playing for long. If you like the sound of the program then give it a try, but I think that you may well be disappointed.**



PRESENTATION 79%
Almost great, but let down by the laborious multi-load.

GRAPHICS 86%
Excellent cartoon-style drawings and animation.

SOUND 60%
Tinny tunes and few simple spot FX.

HOOKABILITY 79%
Quite compulsive, but only for a few hours.

LASTABILITY 39%
Fun to complete once, but rapidly loses any appeal.

VALUE 39%
Not enough long-term enjoyment for the price.

OVERALL 50%
Professional, but lacking any real challenge.





KNUCKLEBUSTERS

Melbourne House, £9.95 cass, joystick only

An extremely nasty criminal called Deke has been sentenced to be turned into an android – and all because of the evil crimes he committed. But he's not going to give up without a fight . . . so he broke out of his cell, sabotaged the central computer – and now all he has to do is get far enough away before the entire place explodes.



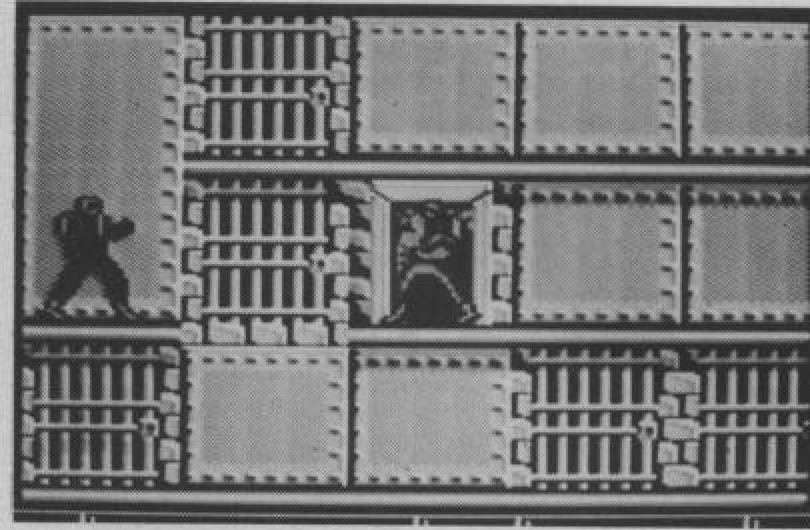
Unfortunately, the great graphics and sensational soundtrack have been let down by the rather limited, and ultimately repetitive gameplay. The fighting sequence has no 'feel', and it's virtually impossible to gauge the strength of an android – or when it's about to explode. Another problem is that the backdrops are very similar, giving no real sense of progression. The game is very difficult to play – if Deke isn't being beaten up, he's losing his way. Still, if you can actually get into the action, there's plenty there to keep you thumping and kicking for a while.



Knucklebusters **could have been a fast, all-action and highly playable variation on the beat 'em up theme. But it isn't – mainly because there doesn't seem to be much skill involved when fighting the androids. The gameplay lacks variety, and there are only a few fighting moves available – which means that the whole thing quickly becomes tedious. It's a great shame that impressive graphics and an incredible soundtrack have been wasted on a fairly run-of-the-mill game.**

Deke must be guided through the maze-like prison complex, the city streets, the seedy downtown precincts and the city wall – before he and the city go up in smoke. His progress is hampered by the presence of five types of android guard, which pursue and attack him throughout his escape attempt. Attacks by these guards drain Deke's energy – as indicated by a bar at the bottom of the screen.

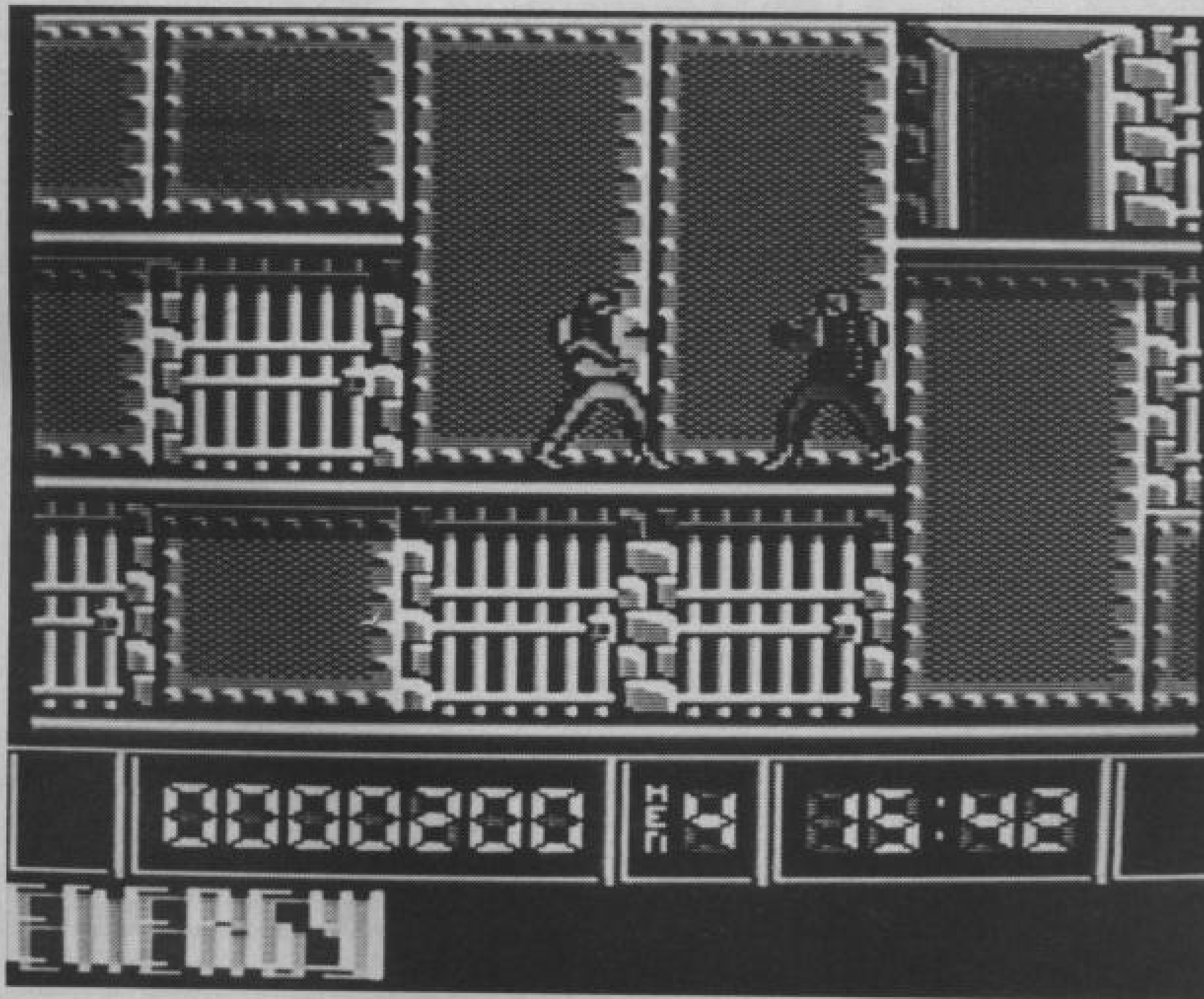
Deke can defend himself by punching and kicking, although some droids are more difficult to destroy than others. To make matters worse, as soon as one droid is disposed of another appears in its place – so, the best bet is to keep moving at all times.



The city is built on three levels, with the hero jumping from one level to another to avoid the marauding androids. The screen scrolls left or right as Deke runs through the complex. Doors are encountered in the walls of the city and prison complex, and positioning Deke in front of one of these and pressing the space bar takes him to the next section. Some of the doors are locked and require a key to open them. Keys are collected by looking under the oil drums and wooden crates which are situated around the complex. Other items which can be found by this method include extra strength, extra lives and bonus points. Occasionally, these receptacles contain poison, which is another drain on Deke's energy.



Knucklebusters **is boring, there is no escaping it. Melbourne House have done a good job of disguising the fact, but basically the gameplay is drastically lacking in content and fun. From the start I found this monotonous, and after I'd seen most of the locations I didn't want to play it any more. The graphics are really slick – the characters are well animated, the backgrounds are detailed, and the scrolling is superb. The soundtrack is brilliant – well up to Rob Hubbard's usual standards, although the spot effects are dull and unimaginative.** Knucklebusters **is a nice piece of software, but not much of a game.**



PRESENTATION 88%
Very slick, with an excellent title screen, high-score table and intermission sequence.

GRAPHICS 82%
Fast, well drawn and smooth scrolling backdrops, coupled with adequate sprites.

SOUND 98%
Weak spot FX, but a stunning Rob Hubbard soundtrack.

HOOKABILITY 60%
Initially tricky, and eventually unrewarding.

LASTABILITY 49%
Rather repetitive and dull.

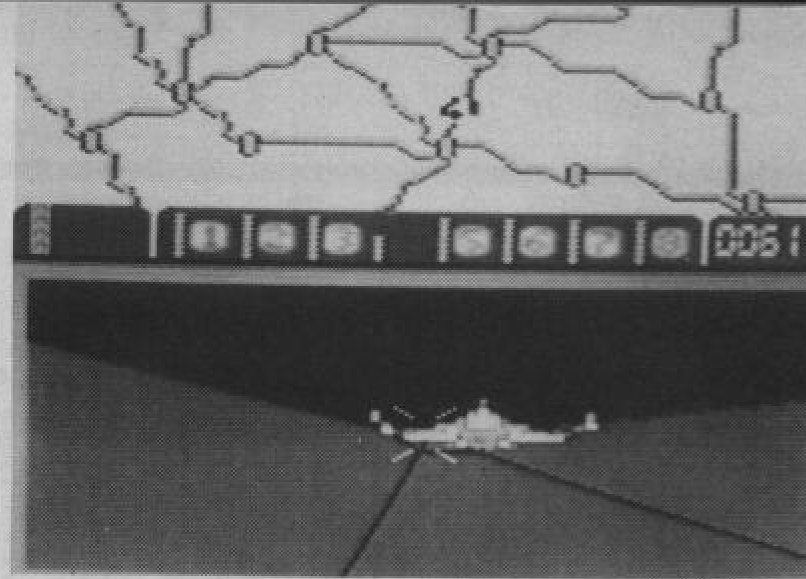
VALUE 48%
Too expensive for an exercise in programming expertise.

OVERALL 56%
A fair to middling beat 'em up, but it could have been far better.

ZZAP! TEST

TRACKER

Rainbird, £14.95 cass, 17.95 disk, joystick only



What does a government do when it wants to let its hair down? In Zeugma, the answer was to build itself a huge, computer-controlled leisure complex on a particularly ugly moon. This appeared to be a good solution, and all went well – until the computer went wrong. This colossal machine got bored of the filth and degradation of the Zeugma population having a good time, so it sent out Cycloids to eradicate the people.

After the fighting died down, and a considerable proportion of the ruling party had kicked the bucket, a Tracker squad was sent in to regain control of the complex. To do this, the central computer has to be blown to bits.

The complex consists of a central sector, containing Centrepoint (the computer centre), and two concentric rings of sectors around it. Each sector consists of interconnecting passages called trackways, along with a communication centre. The sectors are linked only at a few points, called link trackways – and where the trackways meet, they form a node.

Up to eight members of the Tracker squad can be in play at once, and an infinite number of replacements are at your disposal. The Trackers are accessed by pressing their corresponding number on the keyboard, and can be moved in three different ways. They can be told to go to a specific part of the map, in which case they work out the best route themselves. Or, every time they get to a node they can be told which trackway to travel down next. Lastly, they can be steered directly with the joystick.

The screen consists of three sections or bands – the top band is equipped with a short range scanner showing the area of trackways around the squad member selected; the middle band shows how many members of the team are on the surface, and also indicates their present energy level and the number of Cycloids; the bottom section shows a map of the complex, or, if in combat mode, it shows an 'out of cockpit' view of the trackway.

The central computer tries to stop the player destroying parts of the base by producing Cycloids – which it sends out against the Trackers. The Cycloids move faster than Trackers when you use autopilot, but they can be out-run using combat mode. In combat mode, shield energy is lost by colliding with walls or enemy fire – energy lost in combat is slowly replaced though.

A new Tracker can be beamed down when a fellow Tracker is at a node, but only if that sector contains no Communications Centre. The Communications Centres are destroyed either by moving Trackers over all the links between that sector and the neighbouring sectors, or by moving to the centre and dropping a bomb. The Tracker must then leave the node within five seconds or face destruction. If all the Communication Centres in neighbouring sectors are destroyed, a 'safe' sector is produced which the Cycloids cannot enter.

When all the Trackers have been destroyed, or Centrepoint has been blown up, an evaluation of the player's performance is given in terms of Trackers lost to enemy destroyed.



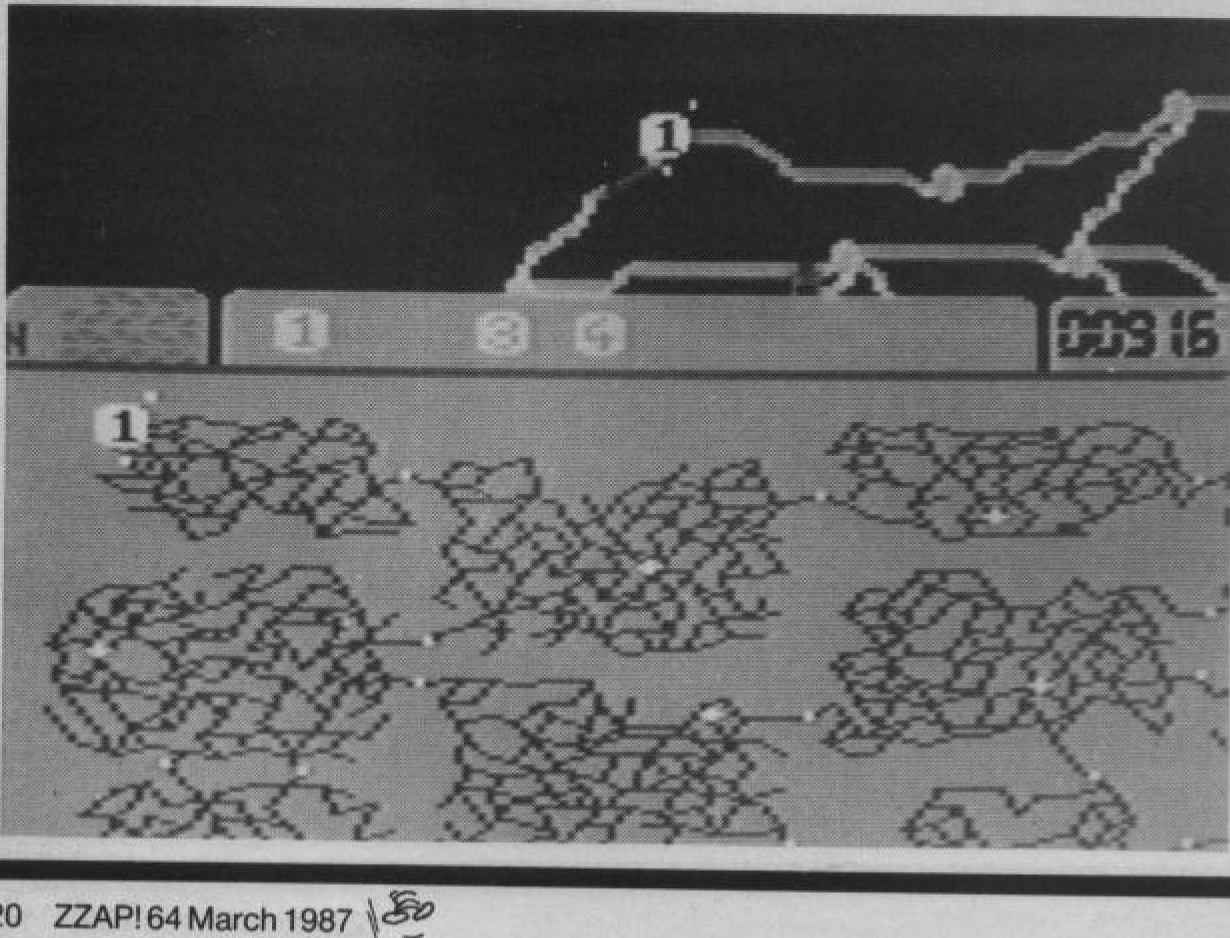
If you read the instructions and scenario, Tracker looks like it's going to be something pretty special. Unfortunately these initial impressions hide the true story: beneath the glossy packaging is a very boring game which offers little in the way of satisfactory action. The arcade sequence is very repetitive and consists of flying down a 3D trench waiting for one craft to come into view so it can be shot at. Graphically and sonically the game is bland, giving an overall lacklustre appearance – something I don't expect from a game that costs fifteen quid.



There is no way you can play this as a simple shoot 'em up, as blowing up the Cycloids is rather tricky (and very tedious). Therefore, you need to keep retreating back to the outer sectors to replace men – most annoying, and quite dull. I would have come back to this game again and again if the arcade element had been any good. But as it is, I feel that this really lets the whole game down, and makes the hefty price-tag rather hard to swallow.



I'm not impressed with Rainbird's policy of dressing games up in big, fancy boxes with glossy booklets – just to create a favourable impression. This is all very well from a marketing point of view, but it's usually deceptive – and this is certainly true in Tracker's case. It's phenomenally overpriced for what it offers. There's not much strategy involved – and not enough arcade action to compensate. To make matters worse, the pace is slow and monotonous, and it didn't hold my attention for very long. If Rainbird spent more time concentrating on the contents of the package, rather than its appearance, they wouldn't end up with such sub-standard produce.



PRESENTATION 72%
Flashy packaging, including a worthless story-book.

GRAPHICS 53%
Functional, but not overly varied.

SOUND 26%
Sparse – mostly bland, white-noise spot FX.

HOOKABILITY 44%
Over-complicated and confusing instructions may lead to frustration.

LASTABILITY 39%
Unrewarding and rapidly repetitious.

VALUE 26%
Ridiculously overpriced – more time appears to have been spent on the package than on the program.

OVERALL 41%
An original, but very dull program which lacks interesting content.




STRIKE
Experience the exhiliration of big league bowling with outstanding graphics and a true perspective action view.
Multiple levels of play, realistic pin action and automatic scoring make 10th Frame a bowling reality the whole family can enjoy. You may even be tempted to invest in high time bowler shoes and shirt once you've become obsessed with this addictive game.
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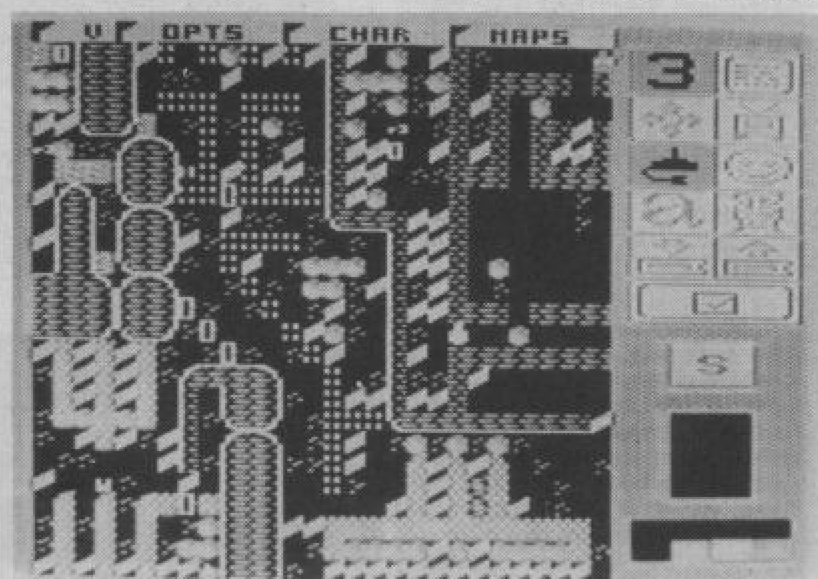


REPTON III

Superior Software, £9.95 cass, £11.95 disk, joystick or keys

Repton, a tiny reptile-like creature, is trapped in a labyrinth consisting of twenty-four treasure filled caves. He can't escape, and can only survive by moving from one cave to another, collecting treasure, and defusing time bombs before they explode.

The screen displays a small portion of the cave which scrolls as Repton moves around. On his travels the intrepid reptile encounters seven different substances: diamonds, walls, dirt, boulders, keys, cages and safes. Repton can walk through dirt, keys and diamonds leaving a blank space behind – whereas boulders, walls, cages and safes create inpenetrable barriers. A boulder can be moved, either by clearing a space under it, which makes it fall until it reaches firm ground – or by pushing it out of the way if it rests alone on a horizontal plane. Falling boulders prove a hazard though, and if the hero digs under one and moves downwards, it falls on him.



When a key is picked up, the safes turn into diamonds – perhaps opening up a new portion of the cave.

Some caves are inhabited by living things: fungus, spirits and foul lizards, all which are death to touch. Fungus is constantly growing and creating problems. If Repton happens to dig out a square which is adjacent to a Fungus growth, the noxious weed grows and fills the newly cleared space. Spirits wander the caves, hugging the walls and turning left at every corner. If one of these encounters a cage, both disappear and a diamond is formed. Foul lizards start life as eggs, and only emerge if the egg is disturbed. When this happens, they immediately pursue Repton and only stop when killed.

The program includes a comprehensive screen designer which the player can use to edit existing screens, create completely new ones – or even redefine the graphics if such a change is required.



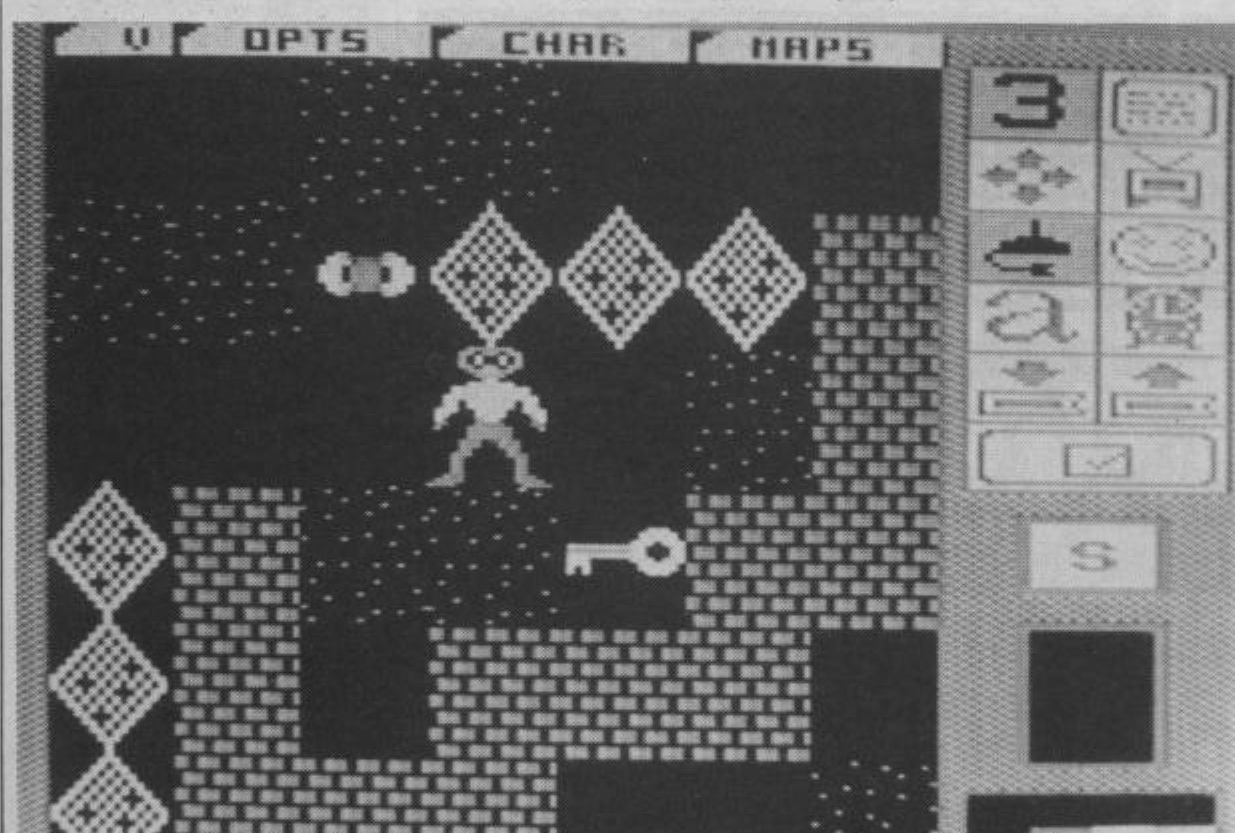
This is very similar to Boulderdash**, but unfortunately it doesn't quite have the charm or playability of that 'classic'. The twenty-four screens require a fair bit of perseverance before they can be completed, but sometimes it's just too easy to die – and having to start all over again is really annoying. Both the sound and graphics are poor, although you can use the excellent screen designer to improve the latter if you really want to.** Repton III **is a nice idea which is badly let down by a number of niggling points.** Boulderdash Construction Kit **is miles better.**



Whatever happened to Repton I **and** Repton II**? Not that I'm particularly bothered about having missed them, judging by the quality of this uninspiring** Boulderdash**-inspired maze game cum collect 'em up. It's just so dull, and not at all atmospheric – unlike** Boulderdash**, the atmosphere of which enhanced its playability no end.** Repton III **is very repetitive – there's far too much running around, and not enough skillful or addictive gameplay to make it worthwhile.**



As Boulderdash **clones go, this is one of the worst and most unprofessional to date. The gameplay is tedious to the point of being infuriating – from my first go I was bored stiff. The cave editor is a neat idea, but unfortunately it is fairly complicated so you always need to have the instruction sheet handy. The graphics are poorly drawn and animated, strangely coloured, and generally badly done. The sound on the other hand is quite good, with a happy tune on the title screen and simplistic but adequate spot effects.** Repton III **would be an average buy at around two quid, but at nearly a tenner I think it offers awful value for money. Don't bother.**



PRESENTATION 90%
Amusing screen designer and a comprehensive series of options.

GRAPHICS 43%
Poor sprites and background graphics, although they can be improved by the user.

SOUND 39%
A naff background tune and not much in the way of spot effects.

HOOKABILITY 50%
Difficult from the beginning, which is very off-putting for a first-time player.

LASTABILITY 52%
If it appeals, the designer will keep you happy for months – if not, frustration will soon give way to boredom.

VALUE 42%
An unworthy investment at this inflated price.

OVERALL 49%
A barely average, difficult and unrewarding *Boulderdash* clone.

FUTURE KNIGHT

Gremlin Graphics, £9.95 cass, joystick or keys

AS Rustbucket crashed on planet 2479 of the Zzrag system +STOP + Require assistance + STOP + Princess Amelia captured + STOP + Come quickly + STOP +.

Having received this distressing message, Randolph the future knight immediately donned his armour, and set forth to rescue his beloved. After accessing the Encyclopedia Galactica reference on 2479, he discovers that it is a forest covered planet ruled by an evil, sex-starved despot called Spegbott, who lives in a huge castle. With this scant information, Randolph begins his quest . . .



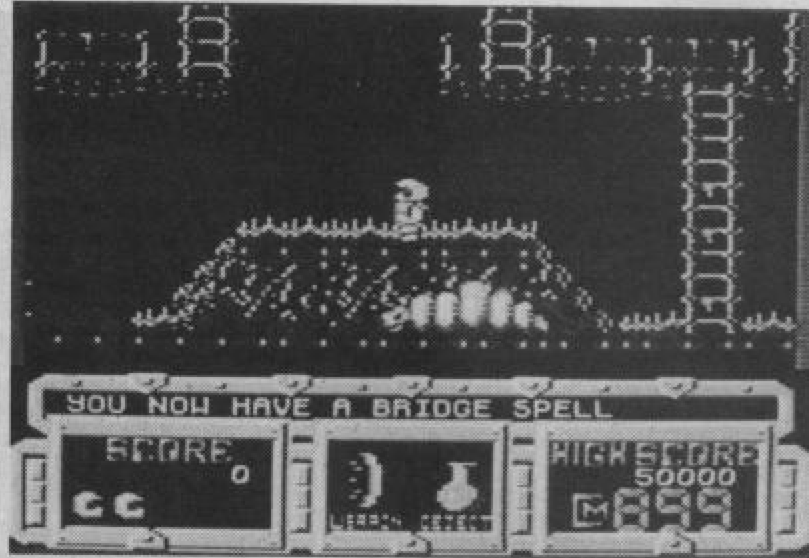
This is very derivative of Ghosts and Goblins **in both its plot and gameplay, although it is more of an arcade adventure than an arcade game. It's moderately addictive, mildly exciting, and pleasant enough to play – it's a shame there isn't more action. As it stands, the whole game plods along at a leisurely pace, and fails to be really stimulating. The graphics and presentation are very polished and slick, the sound is also pleasant . . . in fact, overall** Future Knight **is a very** *nice* **game. It's a shame it lacks any real action.**



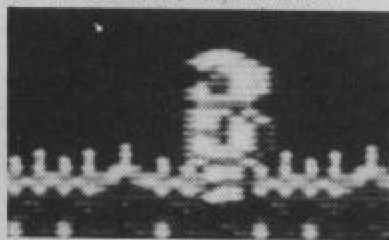
Future Knight **is a highly polished program, with attractive graphics and sound. There are plenty of locations to explore, but the pace is a little too slow for my liking and there isn't enough absorbing action to compensate. Jumping from platform to platform, occasionally shooting robots and aliens proves tedious in a lengthy sitting – but it's the only way it can be completed. Pity about the lack of pace really, as otherwise this is a well above average game.**

Finding the wrecked hulk of the SS Rustbucket, Randolph enters – to find a hive of platforms and ladders. His problems begin as soon as he moves – the ship's 'Bezerka' security droids have been sent haywire by the impact of the crash, and they attack the brave knight on sight. Contact with a droid, or the missiles spewed forth, depletes Randolph's energy – and if it reaches zero, one of Randolph's three suits of armour is destroyed.

The hero is initially armed with a laser, which can be used to destroy the guards. However, it usually takes more than one shot to destroy a droid, so more powerful weapons have to be picked up along the way. Keys and spells are



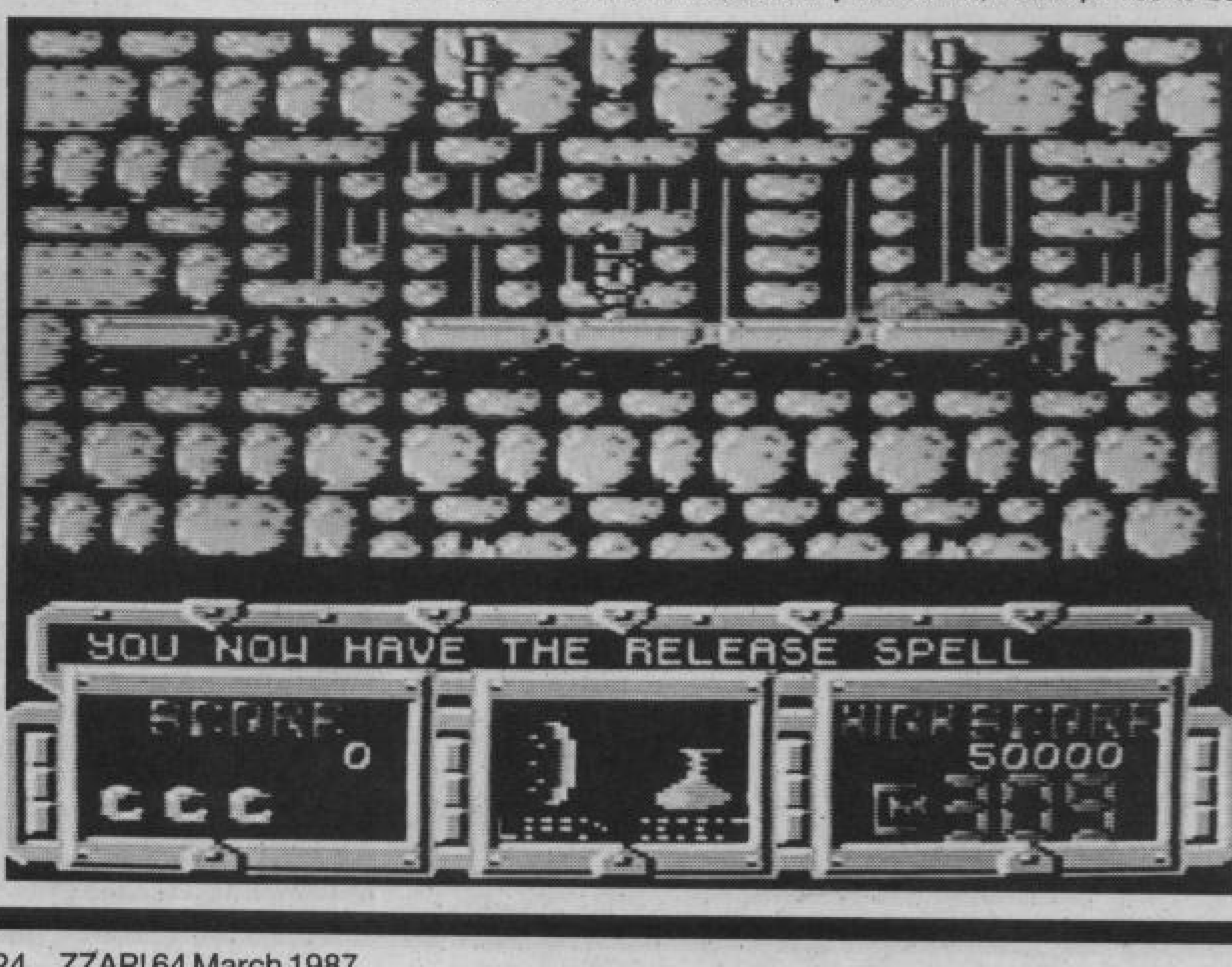
also to be found – some are essential to the mission. There are four spells which can be used at any time to disorientate or destroy the denizens, and nine spells which have to be picked up and used in the correct places if Randolph is to complete the rescue mission.



The SS Rustbucket is huge, and the only way that Randolph can escape is by finding the exit pass, which is used to create an exit to the outside world. Randolph is then transported to the treacherous ghoul-filled forest, where he has to collect the correct spells to give him access to Spegbott's castle – the princess' prison. To rescue her, Randolph has to be carrying two spells – one to destroy the huge robot guardian, and the other to free Amelia from the mystic chains which hold her. But will his true love prevail? . . .



Graphically, Future Knight **is well executed, with some nicely animated characters and lovely surroundings – although the hero does seem to be a little on the porky side. The first thing that struck me was the haunting melody, which generates an eerie atmosphere. The playability is good, although you are more often than not inundated with hostile adversaries that are difficult to avoid, especially when climbing the ladders. All in all though,** Future Knight **offers enough playability to make it stand out from a lot of the software we've seen lately.**



PRESENTATION 75%
Pleasant title screen – no options, but a few useful features.

GRAPHICS 86%
Superb backdrops and neat sprites.

SOUND 69%
A twee medieval title tune, and reasonable spot effects.

HOOKABILITY 74%
Instantly playable, and absorbing for a while.

LASTABILITY 67%
Difficult, but doesn't contain a great deal of variety.

VALUE 64%
Lots to see for your money, but not enough to do.

OVERALL 69%
A run-of-the-mill arcade adventure – in traditional 'save the maiden' style.

OLLI AND LISSA

Firebird, £1.99 cass, joystick or keys

Eugine Portcullis III (Jnr) is an uncultured American with more money than sense. He has descended on the Highlands of Scotland with plans to disassemble one of our ancient monuments and ship it back to the States, bit by bit.

His intended purchase, Shilmore Castle, has been derelict for years, but is inhabited by a handful of ghosts and two affectionate creatures named Olli and Lissa. According to the fables of the supernatural, a ghost is doomed to haunt the abode of its demise forever. However, Sir Humphrey (one of the senior ghosts) is rather attached to his Celtic homeland – so, with the help of his pals Olli and Lissa, he plots to scare Eugine away from Shilmore Castle for good.



I don't like this sort of platform game at all – jumping from platform to platform to platform to... I LOATHE IT! I hate waiting for a nasty to pass before I can jump – all this crucial timing infuriates me, and I despise the repetition. Olli looks sickeningly cute, and found it more rewarding to let him die, just to take the smile off his face. If you do like this sort of mind-numbingly boring platform game though, why don't you rush out and buy it and leave me in peace.

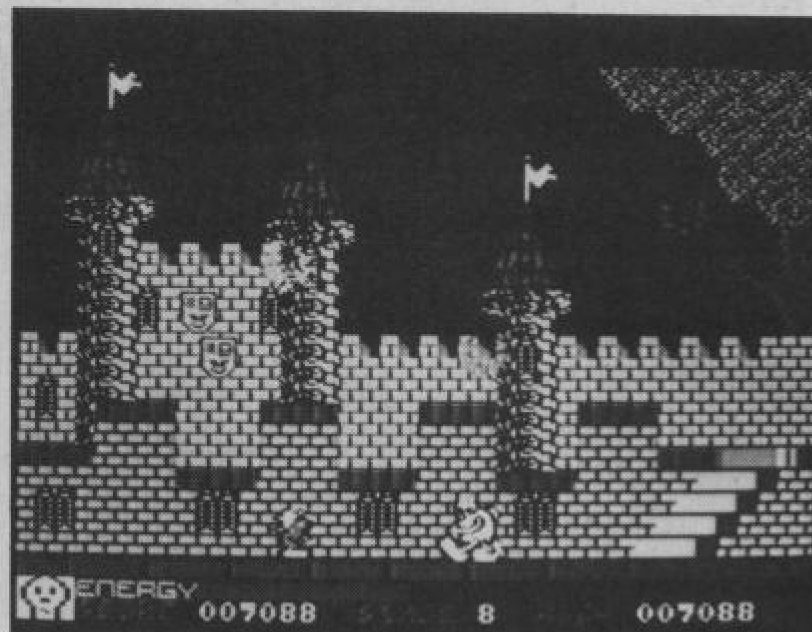


This is one of those strange sort of games that looks nothing special, but is really difficult to put down once you start playing. The objective is straightforward enough, but finishing the tasks is tricky. You wouldn't really expect this to keep you on the edge of your seat, but it's very difficult to keep cool when you're making a homeward dash and the time limit is ticking down. Olli and Lissa is a great budget title, and if you've a couple of pound coins sitting in your pocket I'm sure that they would be quite pleased if you exchanged them for this.

Unfortunately, Sir Humphrey is getting on in ghost years and has lost the power to make himself invisible. Olli and Lissa agree to help Sir H regain this power by finding the special ingredients for the secret transparency spell. It is up to Olli to find the necessary ingredients, within a given time limit – shown at the bottom of the screen.

Sir Humphrey stands by a bubbling cauldron, shouting the name of the element he needs next, while Lissa provides moral support (plus the odd smacker as Olli successfully completes a task). Each screen is divided up into levels – and somewhere, sometimes hidden from view, is the next spell component for Olli to collect. Evil phantoms do their best to thwart the threesome's plans by generally getting in the way. Thankfully, Olli can jump to avoid them – if he touches a spook, he is flipped back to the start of the screen and loses valuable time.

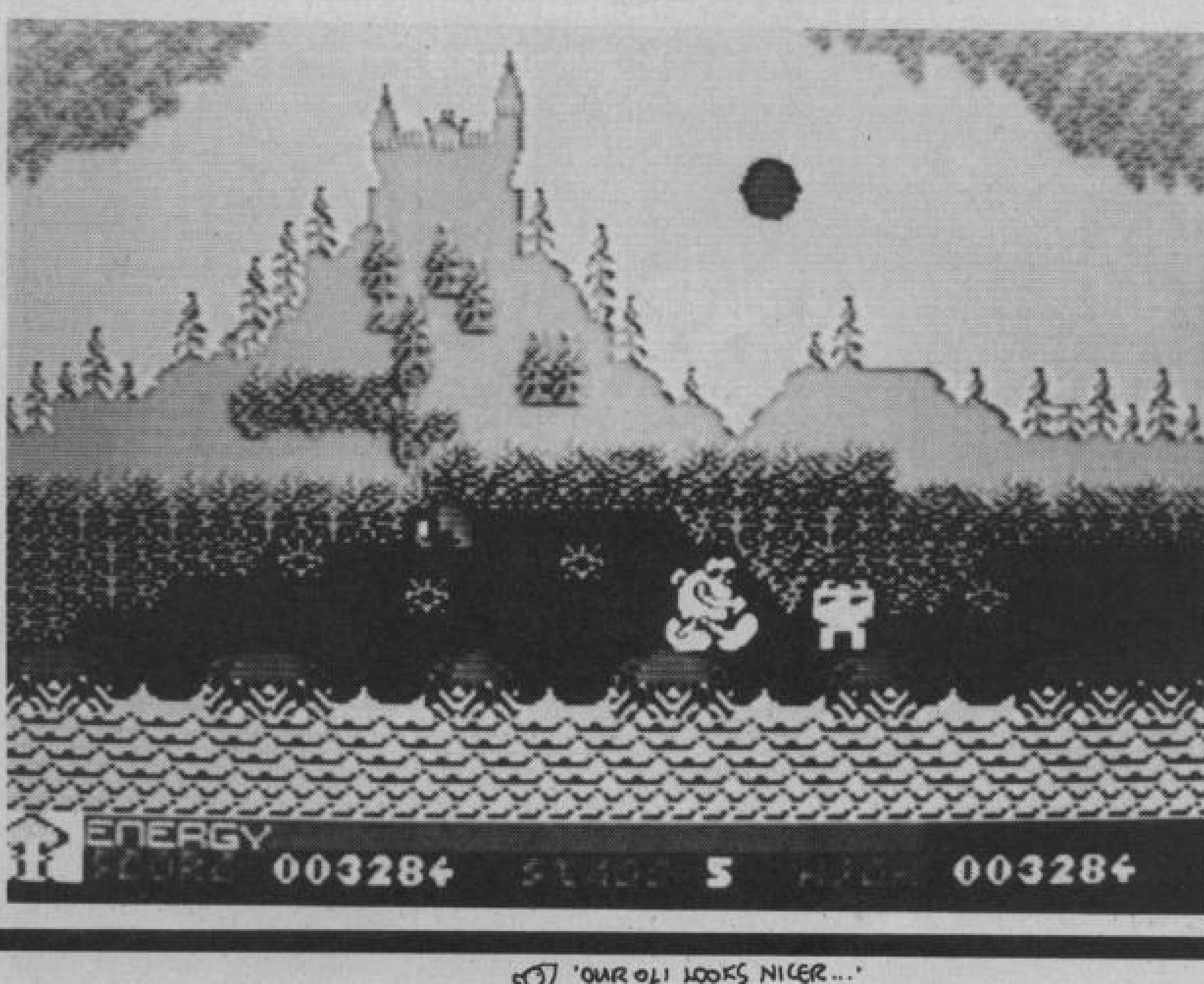
When Olli gets his paws on part of the spell, he has to make his way back to the start of the screen and deliver his prize to Sir Humphrey, who then puts it in the cauldron.



The game ends if Olli doesn't make it back to the Cauldron in time. If he is successful however, he automatically flips onto the next screen . . . and so on, until all the elements of the invisibility spell have been collected.



Olli and Lissa is one of the most compelling (and infuriating) platform games I've seen in ages – and it's only two quid. Precise timing is required throughout, and making Olli jump over the monsters is tricky (and frustrating) at first – but with a bit of practice it soon becomes second nature. Some people hate this sort of platform game, but I love it and if you feel the same, go out and get it.



PRESENTATION 65%
Straightforward in every aspect.

GRAPHICS 69%
Good backdrops, but simple, run-of-the-mill platform game sprites.

SOUND 61%
Decent title tune, but that's about it.

HOOKABILITY 69%
Instantly playable – and frustrating with it!

LASTABILITY 49%
Easily forgotten due to the repetitive platform action and lack of screens.

VALUE 64%
Sensibly priced for such a dated game.

OVERALL 50%
Nothing special – but there's enough fun to be had for two quid.



SKATE ROCK

Bubble Bus, £7.95 cass, joystick only

The local skateboarders have been arguing between themselves, each one trying to prove that he's the best. So, to decide for once and for all, a sensible person has organised a competition. Ten courses have been built around the town, and the skateboarders have to complete them all within an allotted time. To make things a little more difficult, there are eight flags dotted around each course which have to be hit before the finishing line is crossed – otherwise, the player is disqualified.



Although this doesn't really look anything special, it's fun to play, challenging, and pretty addictive. The backdrops aren't too bad, and the sprites are a bit of a mixed bag – some are alright, but others are laughably bad. The sound suits the action, with various boppy tunes and jingles adding to the fun. It's marginally overpriced at eight quid, especially as there are only ten courses to complete, but it's enjoyable and is worth a look if you're a skateboarding fan.

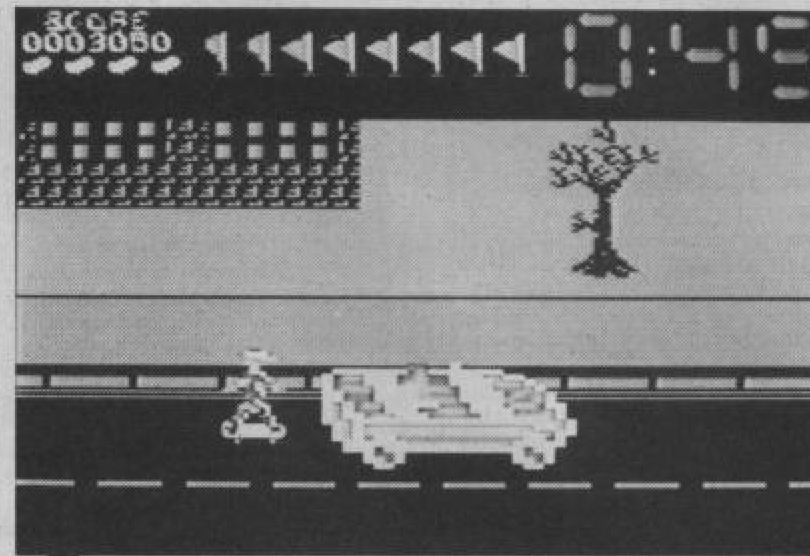
The action takes place on a panoramic view of a street, with your skateboarder in the centre of the screen. The joystick moves the skater in the direction the board is pointing, with the screen scrolling either left or right to keep up with the action. Lateral movements turn the board clockwise and anticlockwise, the setting of the



A fairly cheap and fun skateboarding game – this has got to be a first. Okay, so the graphics look as though they've been built with Duplo blocks – but it really is compelling. Maybe the soundtrack would have been better suited to a different game, as drum solos don't really create the surfin' atmosphere that a funky hip–hop tune would. After a lot of play, Skate Rock **turns out to be just another race against the clock game – but it does offer many hours of entertainment, and is worth considering at the price.**

'trucks' dictating the speed of the turn. Trucks are the wheel mountings on the underside of a skateboard, and their tightness can be set on the title screen. Hitting a kerb, grass verge, parked car, pedestrian or grating results in an upset – and the loss of one of the skater's five lives.

Flags are automatically picked up on contact, and are then displayed at the top of the screen next to a decreasing time limit. When all eight flags have been collected,





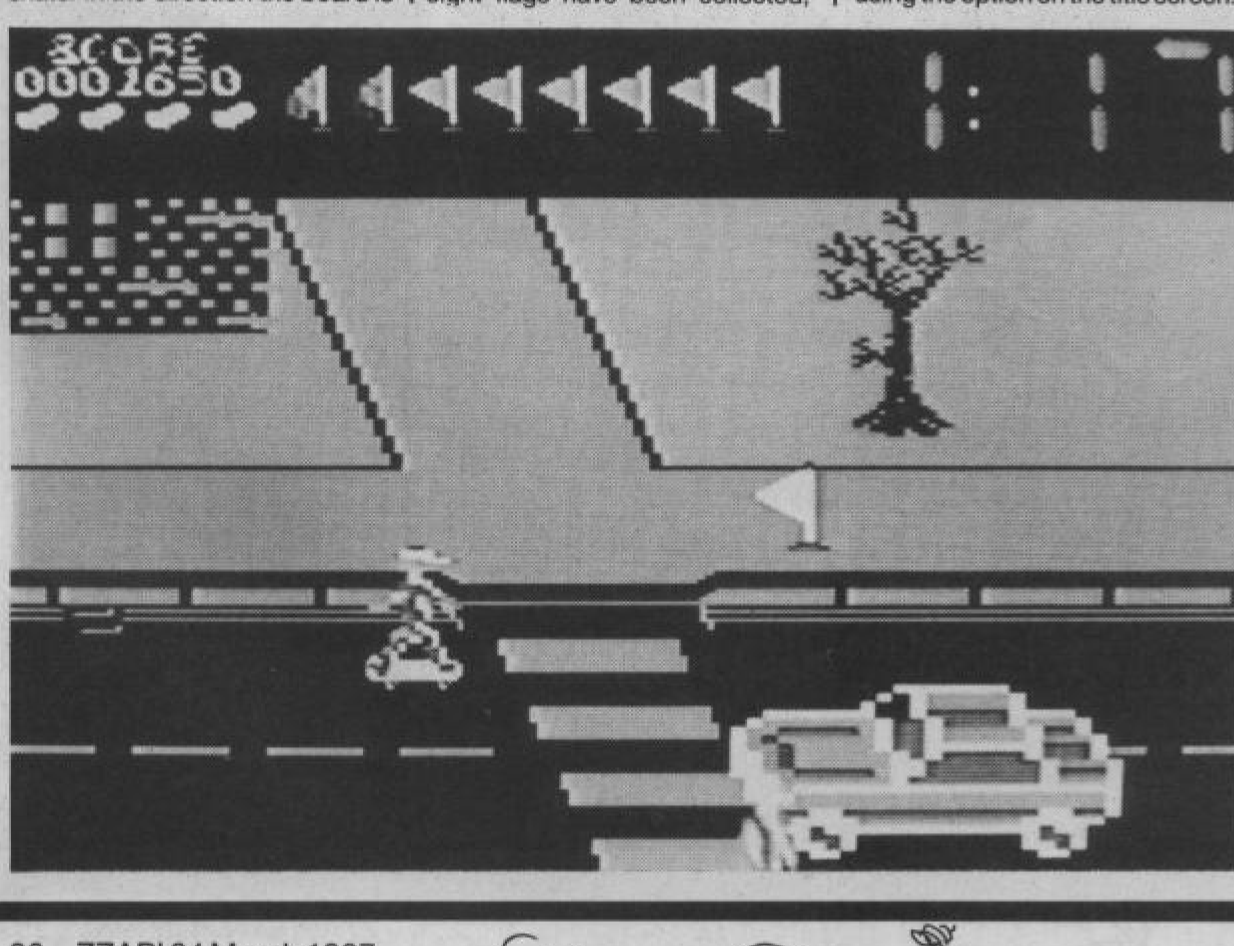
It has to be said that the single most striking feature of Skate Rock **is its ugliness. It looks awful – which is why I was quite surprised to actually find myself enjoying it! The controls are a little tricky to master, but with practice it becomes very playable. There's something about** Skate Rock **that reminds me of** Paperboy, **although I don't know why – out of the two, this is the cheapest and by far the most enjoyable.**

the finishing line can be crossed – whereupon the time limit is turned into bonus points, and the skater is automatically promoted to the next, more difficult course.

If the action appears to have the wrong difficulty level, the time limit can be increased or decreased by using the option on the title screen.



Any course can be tackled, as long as it has been completed before. Thus, the player is saved the hassle of having to complete the courses all over again just to tackle, say, the ninth course.



PRESENTATION 78%
Well executed, with a useful options screen and high-score feature.

GRAPHICS 51%
The backdrops are alright, but the sprites vary from good to incredibly poor.

SOUND 58%
A couple of WeMUSIC tunes jolly along the proceedings.

HOOKABILITY 75%
Difficult to master the control method, but enjoyable nevertheless.

LASTABILITY 58%
The ten courses take some cracking, but interest may wane after completing them.

VALUE 64%
Sufficient fun to be had for eight quid.

OVERALL 66%
A rather enjoyable skateboarding game – worth a look.

NOSFERATU THE VAMPYRE

Piranha, £9.95 cass, joystick or keys

Nosferatu The Vampyre was one of the first blood-suckers to stalk the silver screen. Continuing this tradition, he has now become one of the first vampires to terrorise the circuits of your Commodore . . .

Nosferatu is divided into three different sections, each being tackled independently in a set order. The first section involves the player taking the role of mild-mannered estate agent, Jonathan Harker.

Nosferatu has decided to move from his mansion on the hill, down into the local village of Wismar – and Jonathan is sent to bring him the deeds to a village house. He finds out that Nosferatu is a Vampire, realises the potential danger of the situation and flees the mansion – forgetting to take the deeds with him. With the deeds to the house in his possession, Nosferatu would be the legal owner. Realising this, Jonathan decides to return to the mansion and recover the documents . . .

The screen displays an isometric perspective view of the action, which flicks from room to room as Jonathan moves about the house. The mansion comprises all manner of features – such as large sets of stairs, huge chairs, long banquetting tables, four-poster beds, libraries and giant halls. Jonathan can move anywhere he likes, and interact with, or pick up most of the objects he encounters.

Hordes of foul creatures inhabit the mansion, including rats, bats and rabid wolves. Contact with these creatures drains his energy – represented at the bottom of the screen by a growing coffin. The consequences are fatal if this casket becomes complete. Food is dotted around the mansion which can be eaten to replenish the lost energy, and there are crucifixes, swords and candles which can also be picked up to make Jonathan's task a mite easier.

The second section takes place in the town of Wismar and features three characters: Jonathan Harker, his wife Lucy and a chap called Van Helsing. Nosferatu has come to Wismar and is feeding off the population. Naturally he must be stopped, and for some reason Lucy is the only person capable of carrying out this task.

The player controls all three characters, switching between them by pressing the relevant keys. Getting Jonathan, Lucy and Van Helsing to meet is hampered by the hordes of rats that swarm around the town. The inhabitants of Wismar must also be fended off, as they have been bitten by Nosferatu and turned into thirsty vampires.

The final section puts the player into Lucy's shoes. She has to lure Nosferatu to her house so that he can be killed. However, Jonathan and Van Helsing are unaware that Lucy alone can kill the vampire, and are united in keeping her away from what they consider to be grave danger. Consequently, she has to lock her two friends in the house before luring Nosferatu into her bedroom. She then has to keep him there until the sun's rays shine through the window at dawn, killing the fanged beast and freeing the pitiful inhabitants of Wismar.



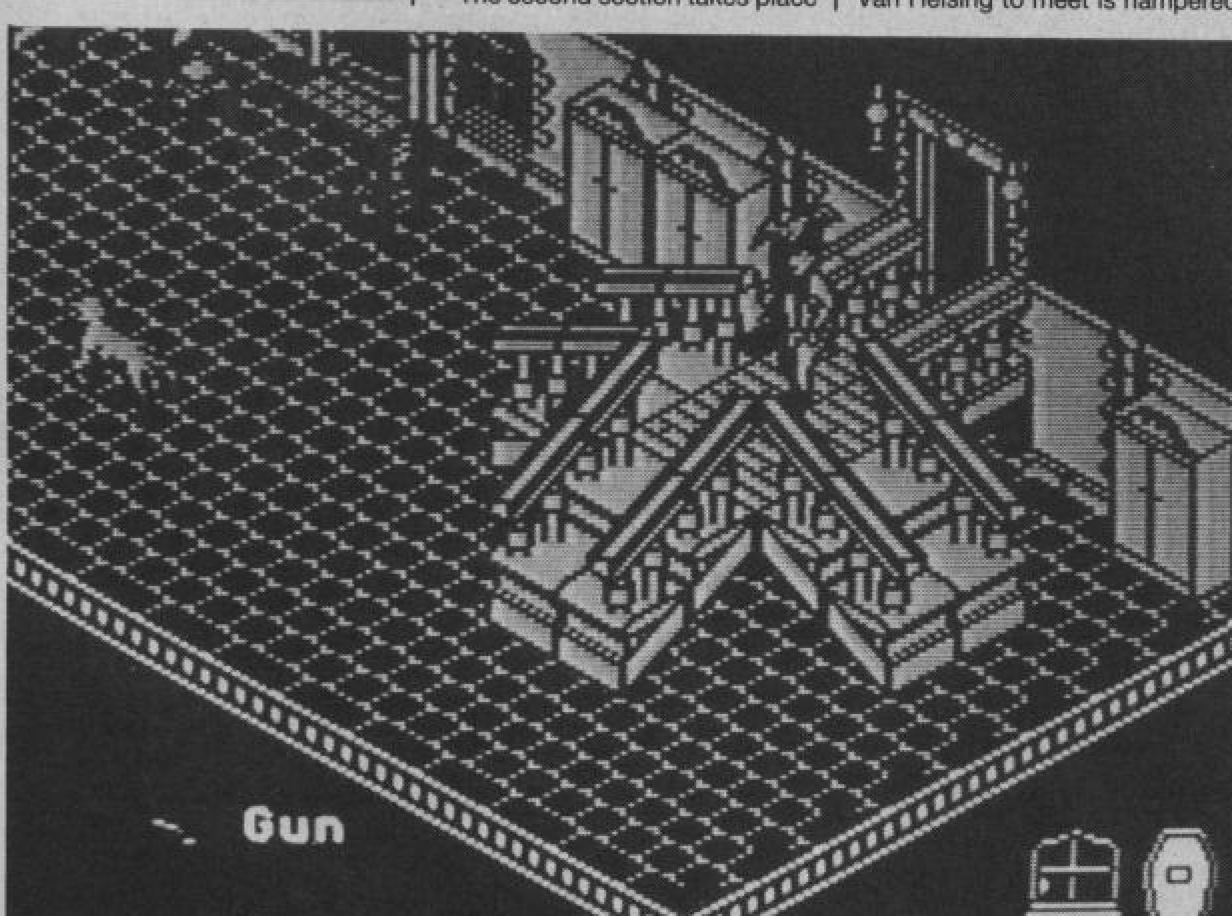
I've never really enjoyed playing this type of 3D arcade adventure, but for some perverse reason I found Nosferatu **highly engrossing after only a few plays. There are plenty of attractive locations to explore (and map), and the pace is surprisingly fast – even when there are other things moving on screen. The puzzles are straightforward enough to solve, although occasionally the process proves a little tedious. I don't think** Nosferatu **is much of a tie-in, but it's a decent game in its own right and well worth a look.**



I'm well impressed with Nosferatu **– it's the first game with this type of graphics that involves a little more than just remembering the layout of a maze. Graphically this is excellent – the animation is superb, and the attention to detail is meticulous. The sound is the biggest disappointment, with an annoying tune and dire spot effects. Games like this don't usually do anything for me – but** Nosferatu **does. I'm not sure that it will keep me playing for any great length of time, but it is the best game of its type available, and I thoroughly recommend it.**



A very fast, forced perspective arcade adventure – that's something we haven't seen on the Commodore. Not until now, that is. Nosferatu **is amazing – you can explore the many beautifully drawn locations, interact with objects and pick up items – all at really high speed. The graphics are monochrome, but they work very effectively and portray the action perfectly. The sound is dire though, with a terribly grating 'tune' playing throughout (although there is the option of turning this off). If you're an arcade adventurer looking for something really tasty to get your teeth into, then try this . . . and perhaps** Nosferatu **will have you bitten!**



PRESENTATION 88%
No title screen to speak of – but otherwise very slick, with load and save feature, and a joystick or redefinable keyboard option.

GRAPHICS 91%
Very effective monochromatic, forced perspective 3D display.

SOUND 23%
A really dire tune plays throughout.

HOOKABILITY 89%
Exploring gives immediate pleasure, although completing the objectives takes some doing.

LASTABILITY 87%
Over a hundred screens to explore and lots to solve.

VALUE 85%
Plenty of bytes for your money.

OVERALL 88%
A superlative forced perspective arcade adventure – try it if you dare.


lėvi'athan (lǐvəi·ăþăn). ME.
[a. L. (Vulg.), a. Heb. *livyāthān*. Ult. origin unkn.]
n. huge ship; anything very large of its kind.
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DANDY

Electric Dreams, £9.99 cass, £14.99 disk, joystick only

Thor and Sheba are the two main characters in *Dandy*, a one or two player, flick-screen maze game. They have been locked in an environment consisting of fifteen dungeons, and they have to make their way through the complex before their allotted 1000 energy points run out.

Scattered throughout the dungeons are keys, food, treasure and spells – these are automatically picked up on contact. All collected items are displayed at the bottom of the screen, along with a numerical representation of energy remaining. Collecting food automatically increases the energy total by fifty points, and treasure can be traded in return for ten energy points. Spells can be cast to either kill, paralyse or disorientate the oncoming enemy. However, care must be taken not to shoot any of these objects, as this completely destroys them – occasionally making the completion of a dungeon impossible.

Three types of enemy creature inhabit the dungeons – hooded monks, demon heads and spiders. Spiders are the most numerous and also the easiest to kill, taking only one shot to destroy them – demons and monks are a little more resilient however, and need five shots to ensure their destruction. Demon heads appear from the dungeon walls and follow the characters everywhere, while Monks and spiders tend to be in the vicinity of the lifts from which they emerge.

Disposing of all the opposition on screen allows you to destroy the lifts, effectively preventing them from reappearing. Teleporter pads (black disks within a square) transport the characters randomly from pad to pad, thus giving access to totally enclosed rooms.

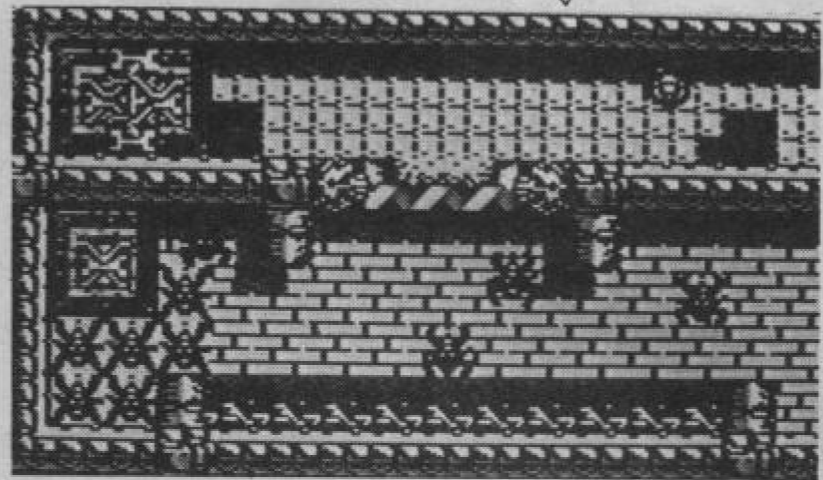
To progress to the next level, you have to battle through each dungeon and find the trap door – but hurry, that energy is disappearing fast!



Let's face it – any Gauntlet **clone released now has missed the boat. Mind you, I don't think this would have ever caught it in the first place. The graphics are sub-standard: small, poorly defined sprites skate about over a series of equally badly drawn backdrops, and the sound is pathetic. The whole program is really badly designed – both players can wander off the screen in opposite directions and it's not really clear what should be shot or picked up. Another minus point is that there are only fifteen levels – if you want to play a** Gauntlet **game you might as well buy the real thing.**

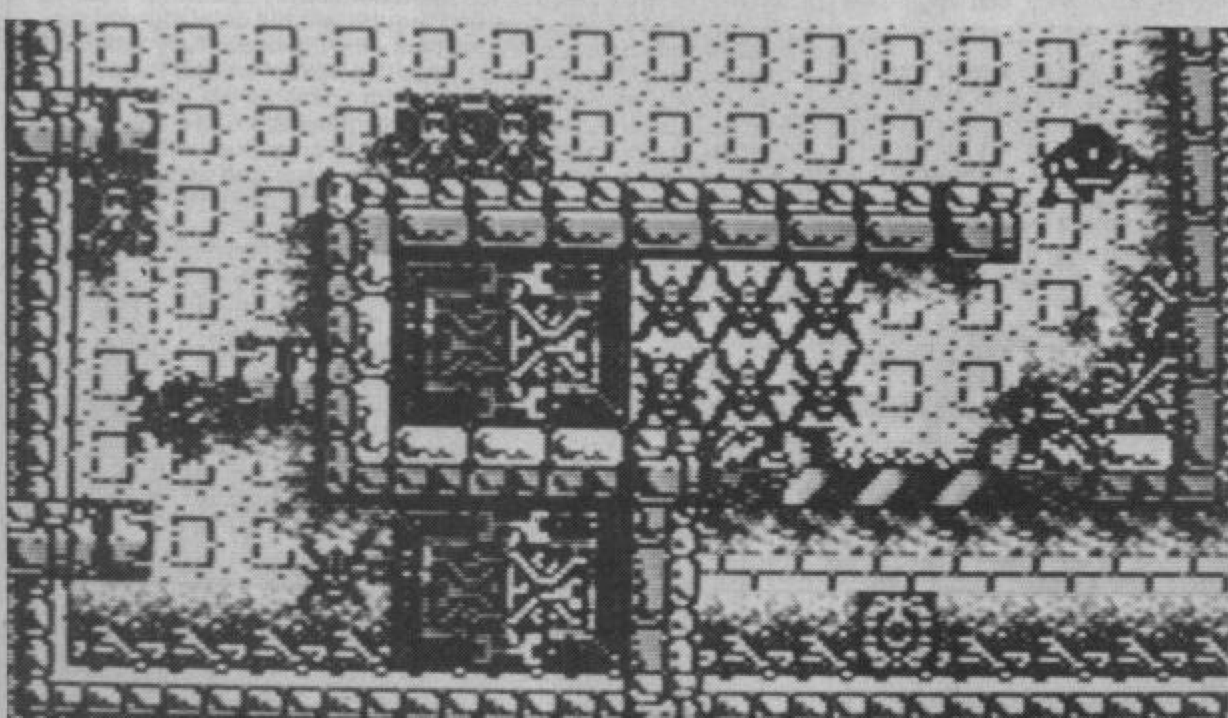


There are two major problems with Dandy**: first, the graphics are terribly unclear and only serve to confuse the proceedings – and second, it's flick-screen, which doesn't suit this type of action at all. The pace is slow, and it wasn't long before I became frustrated and completely bored with the whole thing. There are far better** Gauntlet **variants available than this – it's even worth considering Mastertronic's** Storm **as an alternative, as it's not quite as bad as** Dandy **and costs considerably less.**





If Dandy had appeared in the early summer before all the other Gauntlet variants, I might well of thought better of it. Unfortunately I've seen how good these games can be on the 64 and Dandy doesn't rate at all. It began to annoy me after a very short amount of play – the dungeons are all very similar, so monotony sets in once you've gone through a couple of them. The graphics are generally sloppy, and it is very easy to lose your player amongst the masses of dungeon dwellers as they are the same colour. The sound is also dire – there's no music, and the spot effects used could easily be reproduced on a Spectrum. I can't recommend this, as it quite simply offers awful value for money.



PRESENTATION 51%
A two-player option, but lacking sufficient instructions and a title screen.

GRAPHICS 29%
Very messy and confusing – unimaginative use of colour, poor sprites and badly defined backdrops.

SOUND 18%
A few unimaginative spot effects.

HOOKABILITY 34%
Initial interest might be generated due to the *Gauntlet* overtones.

LASTABILITY 23%
The frustrating and tedious nature of the game soon repels.

VALUE 20%
Ludicrously overpriced for such a poor game.

OVERALL 28%
The worst *Gauntlet* variant money can buy.

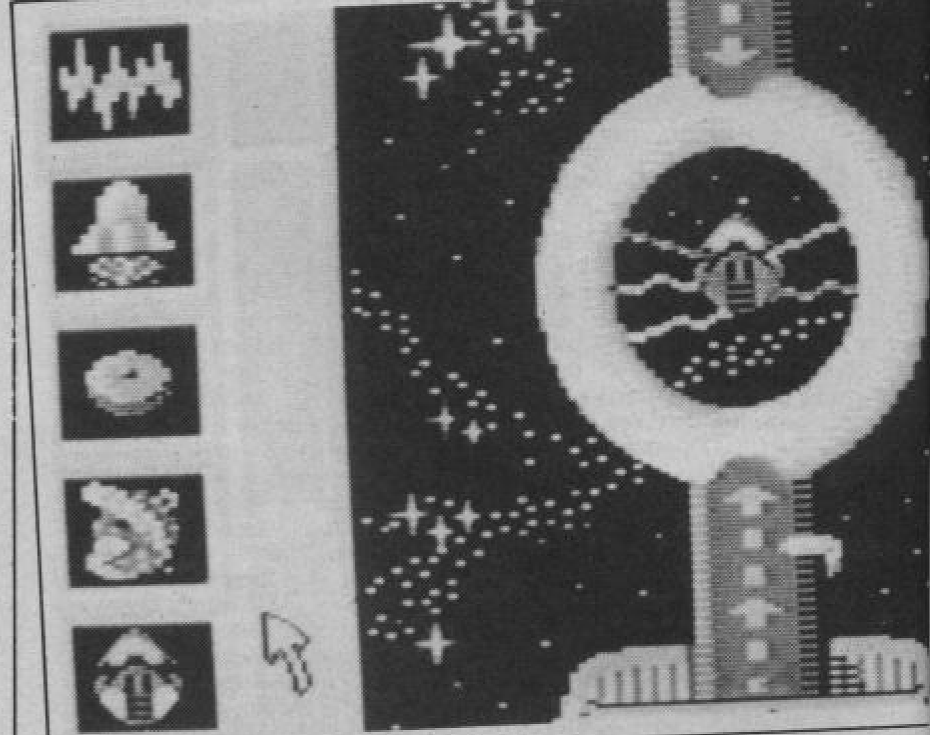


STYLER

MUTANTS

Ocean, £8.95 cass, joystick or keys

●**An unusual, visually stimulating and highly entertaining shoot 'em up**



An interstellar war has been raging for hundreds of years. Weaponry has constantly been evolving, and now *Mutants*, the ultimate biological weapon, are being used to destroy space-craft, colonies and planets. Genetically engineered, these biological monsters are designed to attack and destroy anything that they encounter.

A group of pacifists discovered that the Survivor Zero Corporation is responsible for these biological weapons. It was decided that if this Company was destroyed, millions of lives would be saved. Therefore you, an ex-space pilot turned pacifist, have volunteered to carry out this task . . .

The Survivor Zero Corporation holds the Macro-Genetic monsters in fifteen electrical pens, hidden in the depths of space. Situated at the controls of a highly manoeuvrable fighter craft, the player enters each pen in an attempt to collect the self-destruct mechanism therein. Once acquired, it can be taken to the sixteenth pen – the control zone, and placed on an assembly unit (after a simple maze has been negotiated). When all fifteen mechanisms are assembled, the giant organisms and holding pens are destroyed – allowing the player to progress to the second level.

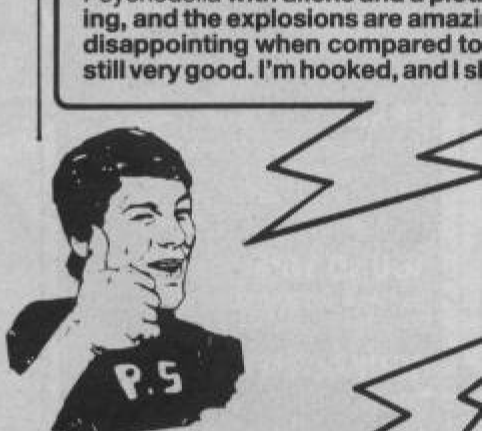
The mission commences with the screen showing a view of the fighter inside a teleport ring. Six icons are situated to the left of the screen, and allow the player to toggle between the music and sound effects, change the fighter's current armament, and launch attacks on the alien enemy. The fighter has three types of weapon: missiles, which can be shot one at a time to decimate large areas; barriers (limited in number, these are used to erect a shield against the mutants); and rapid firing photon torpedoes. It's up to the player to decide which weapon to use against the mutants.

Once the armament has been chosen, the attack can begin by selecting the launch icon. The screen displays a four by four grid, representing the sixteen pens of the mutant breeding colony. The top left square is the control zone – all the rest are mutant pens. A pen is selected and entered by using the cursor and pressing the

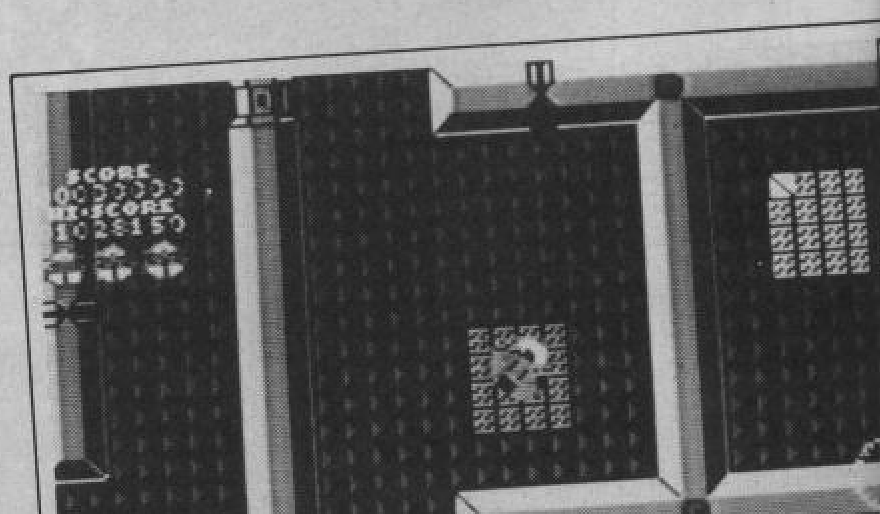


This is fabulous! Obviously a lot of thought has gone into the design, because it plays so incredibly well. It's difficult enough to drive you mad with frustration when you slip up, but so incredibly addictive that you constantly return for another crack. What's really amazing though, are the colourful and superbly drawn mutants themselves – they're beautifully designed, and ebb and flow as they chase the fighter around the screen. The action gets really frantic with some of the more vicious mutants, and it takes a fair bit of playing before any sort of tactics are discovered. The sound is great too, with a choice between an extremely good backing track and some excellent spot effects. An essential purchase – miss it and you're missing something special.

This is one of the weirdest shoot 'em ups I've ever seen. I was surprised to see that it isn't from Minter, as it has a lot of game-play similar to some of his games. Graphically Mutants **is the most exciting game that I've seen in ages – it's like playing** Psychedelia **with aliens and a plot. The use of colour is astounding, and the explosions are amazing. The sound is perhaps a bit disappointing when compared to the rest of the game, but it is still very good. I'm hooked, and I shall be for a long while yet . . .**







Mutants **is extremely pretty, with some very obvious** Psychedelia **influenced alien movement patterns. The sound is good too, with some decent music and spot FX. However, there's not really much to it – fifteen similar sub-levels where you have to figure out the best way of picking up a self-destruct mechanism, occasionally blasting mutants. I found this rather addictive – for a few hours anyway. But I wasn't captivated for much longer, and subsequent plays failed to fire my enthusiasm.** Mutants **isn't exceptional, but it is fairly original and playable, and offers sufficient entertainment for the price.**



fire button – the fighter then materialises on a safe square in the centre of the pen, and has to be guided to the self-destruct mechanism.

The pen is surrounded by an electric fence which destroys anything that crashes into it. Certain strains of mutant maraud around the pen, trying to attack the fighter and diminish its shields – shown as a bar to the right of screen. Some mutants are stronger than others, with the stronger mutants causing greater damage to the fighter's shields. Strength is represented on-screen as a bar – the bigger it is, the stronger and more virulent the mutant.

Having collected the self-destruct mechanism, the fighter has to be guided back to the central square. The final decision is whether to return to the control zone and dump off the already collected device, or to tackle another mutant pen.

PRESENTATION 90%
Well designed, with an easy to use icon system and informative instructions.

GRAPHICS 95%
Very unusual, colourful and highly effective.

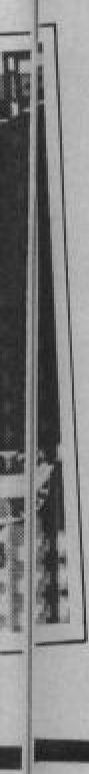
SOUND 86%
Two excellent tunes and brilliant sound effects.

HOOKABILITY 90%
May prove overwhelming, but the action is instantly enjoyable and addictive.

LASTABILITY 86%
Very playable and compelling.

VALUE 87%
Plenty of compulsive blasting for nine quid.

OVERALL 90%
A new and exciting concept which should interest shoot 'em up fans.



EREBUS

Virgin games, £8.95 cass, joystick only

Waste disposal is a very messy business – thus, it seems logical that any advanced civilization capable of space travel would find some nice clean way of avoiding this problem. The solution that Earth might find in the distant future is to take all noxious substances and dump them on some other planet. In *Erebus*, the problems attached to this solution are considered . . .

A chemical refinery has been set up on the distant world of Erebus in order to process the Earth's waste. A planet processing several million tons of rubbish per day is no place for any man, so the system has been automated. All was well, until marauding aliens took over the plant and used it to produce a deadly nerve gas.

The refinery is split into circular sections, interlinked by ducts. Underneath this horizontally scrolling landscape is an information panel which gives the score, number of lives remaining, and a level completion indicator.

The joystick is used to move your fighter around the playing area – pressing the fire button launches missiles at the waves of attacking enemy craft. Collision with raised ground features or enemy bullets proves fatal, although the fighter can pass under alien ships without hindrance.

The fighter has to complete a circuit of the entire circular section, and destroy enough enemy fighters to open a duct which allows access to the next level . . . after enduring a 30 second bonus section. Aliens appear from the right, and can be destroyed to gain extra points. A direct hit does not result in death, but sends the fighter directly to the beginning of the next level.



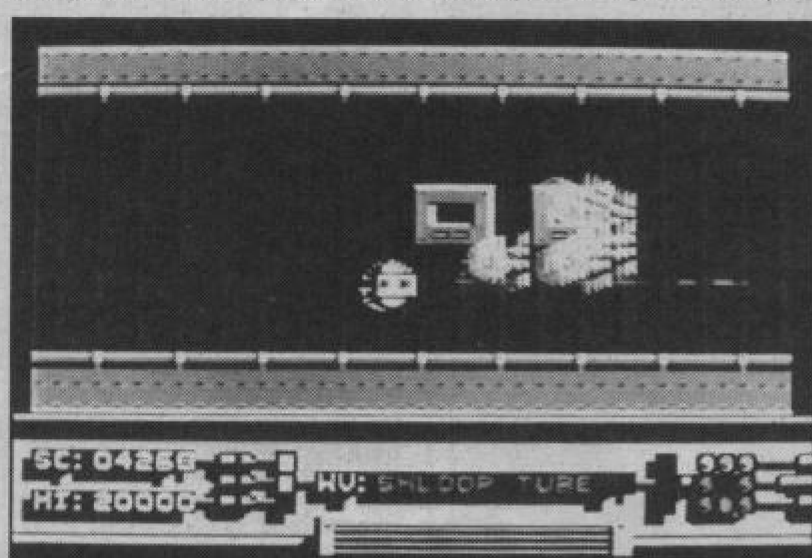
This is a mainstream bi-directionally scrolling shoot 'em up, which offers nothing innovative but is still fun to play. Both the graphics and sound are good, with some very pretty backdrops and sprites, and decent spot effects. I do feel however that there is something missing in the action. Rolling backwards and forwards, blasting the hell out of the denizens is enjoyable at first, but it palls after a few games. It would have been nice if there was something to protect apart from yourself. Still, if you're a shoot 'em up fan then it might be worth your while, but there are plenty of other games on the market which offer more action and variety.

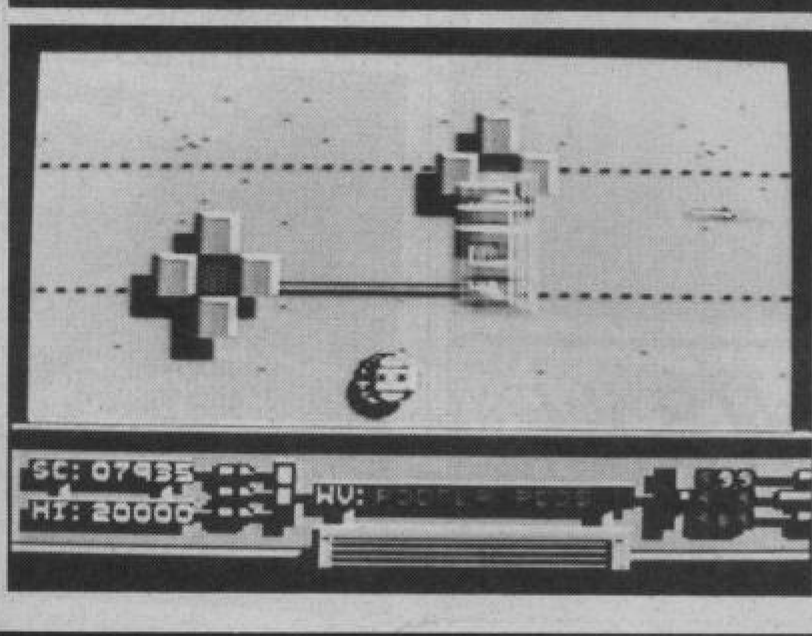


There seem to be a great many shoot 'em ups around these days, but this one is far from extraordinary. The backgrounds are very well drawn with plenty of detail, and the alien ships look good and move in a satisfying manner. There don't seem to be any bonus lives, so sooner or later you're going to kick the bucket – pity. I can't see many shoot 'em up fans wanting to buy this, as it offers nothing special or new.



Erebus is yet another mediocre addition to the already saturated range of scrolling shoot 'em ups. It's attractive – but it's far from original, and more often than not unexciting. The sound has nothing to offer either, with an ordinary tune and bland spot effects. I've seen too many games of this type lately to be excited when a supposedly new one comes along.





PRESENTATION 72%
Acceptable title screen and high-score table.

GRAPHICS 82%
Pleasant backdrops and adequate sprites.

SOUND 59%
Reasonable title tune and simple spot FX.

HOOKABILITY 68%
Mildly addictive but hardly compulsive.

LASTABILITY 53%
Over 30 levels of blasting action, but it proves quite tedious remarkably quickly.

VALUE 51%
Lacking enough variety to warrant its price.

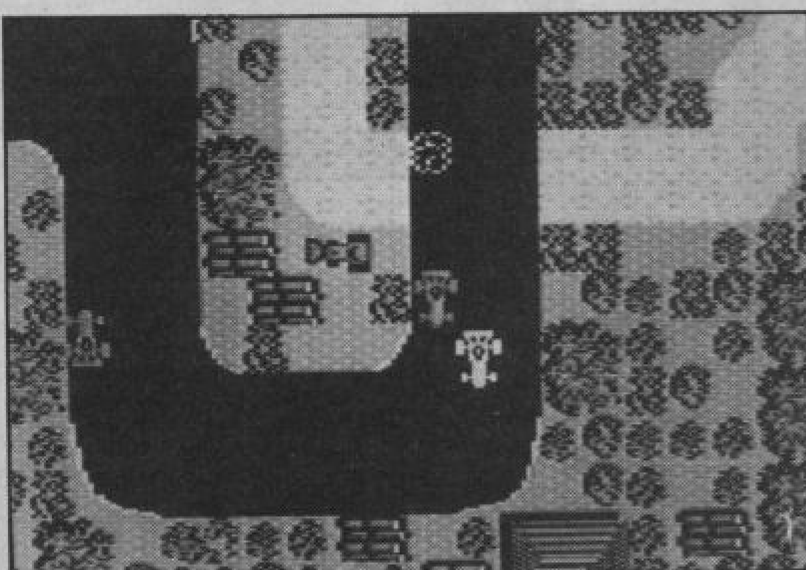
OVERALL 56%
Another unoriginal, and on the whole unexciting shoot 'em up.

STREET MACHINE

Software Invasion, £8.95 cass, £11.95 disk, joystick or keys

Street Machine is a motor racing simulation with a straightforward objective: to complete a set course as quickly and safely as possible.

Prior to a race the screen displays eight cars, one of which is chosen by the player. The race begins with an aerial view of the starting grid. The eight cars line up in pairs, with the chosen vehicle placed in the back row. A signal sounds . . . and they're off – the player's seven opponents under computer control.





I was slightly amused by Street Machine **at first – but only because it's so bad. The action is slow, jerky and dated – just like the graphics, and then there are the awful sound effects . . . Basically, there's nothing even halfway decent about this game. It's immensely overpriced, and offers little in the way of entertainment – well, apart from the unintentional initial amusement.**

If a corner is taken too quickly, the car skids off the road and crashes. A particularly horrific smash-up causes the car to explode, and disqualifies you from the race. If the crash is less severe, the screen changes to show a list of seventy car components and their 'damage total' percentages. A timer ticks down, and using a cursor the components have to be highlighted one at a time to reduce their damage number. The object of this exercise is to get all the damage totals to below 30 within the allotted time – failure to do so results in the car becoming a write-off and being removed from the race. If the car is repaired in time however, it is put back on the road and allowed to carry on racing.

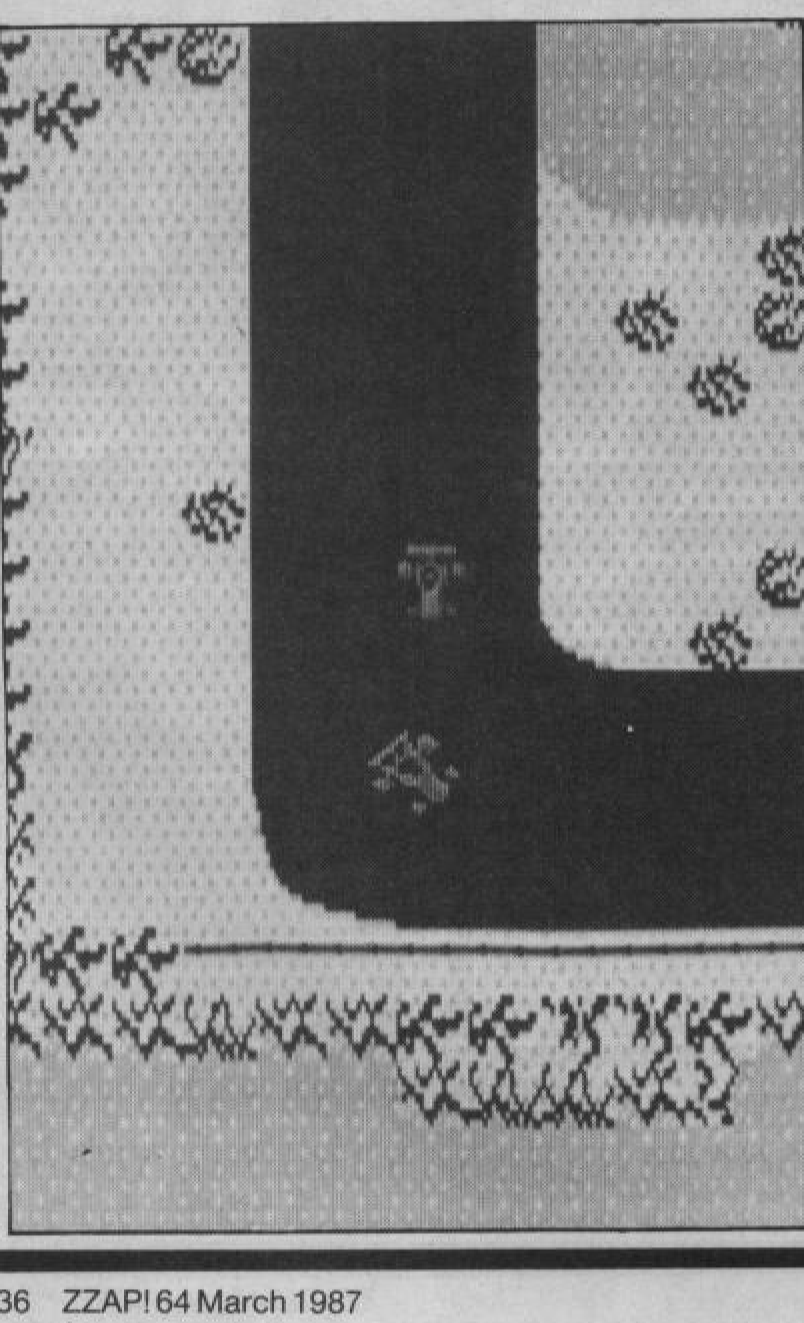
The race continues in this fashion until the course is completed or the car is disqualified. On completion, the time taken is displayed and the race starts again – although this time the roads are more slippery, and consequently the course is more difficult.



This is awful – there's no question about it. The gameplay is archaic and the damage screen is totally useless – adding as much to the action as a poke in the eye. The graphics are of similar ilk: eight unimaginative single-colour sprites racing over a poorly drawn landscape which judders and jerks as it scrolls. The sound is also pathetic, with the simplest of spot effects complementing the most rudimentary of explosions. When you consider that for an extra quid you can buy Super Cycle **or** Pitstop II, **it becomes pretty obvious that the whole package is grossly over-priced. I recommend you look elsewhere if you want a decent racing simulation.**



Street Machine **is a variation on a theme that has been around as long as the 64 – AND WE'RE ALL BORED WITH IT! I managed to survive one mindless hour of this today – it wasn't totally unpleasant, but I can't honestly see myself ever wanting to do it again. The graphics are of a standard that would have been laughed at three years ago – the sprites are blocky and poorly detailed, and the track scrolls abysmally. The sound is also pretty limp, with a bog-standard engine noise and a couple of effects that are hardly likely to impress anyone. It just isn't good enough to warrant its high price – but these days how many programs are?**





PRESENTATION 64%
Reasonable instructions and ingame presentation.

GRAPHICS 31%
Poor single-colour sprites, and a naff backdrop which doesn't scroll smoothly.

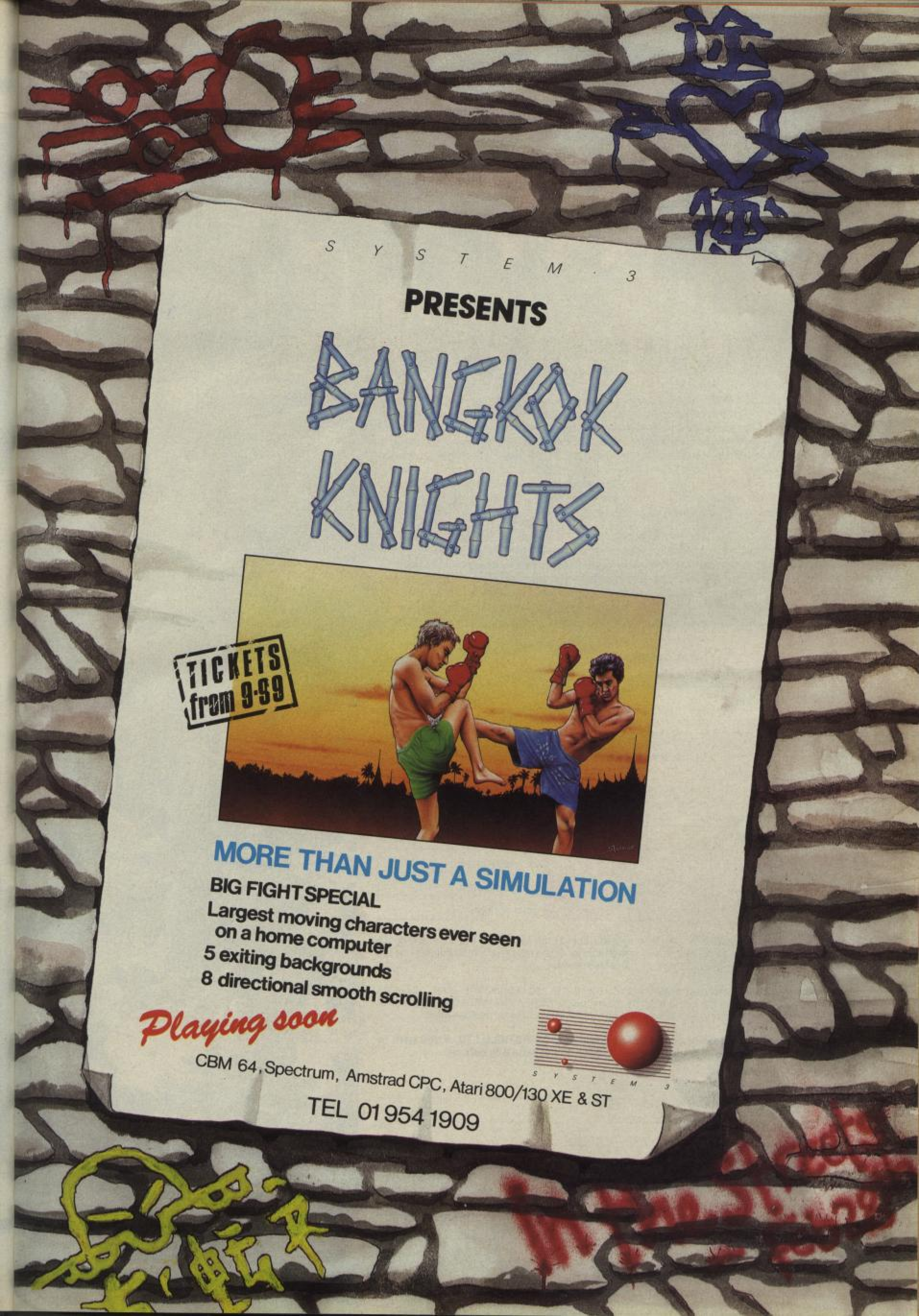
SOUND 9%
A few sub-standard spot effects.

HOOKABILITY 32%
It's easy enough to get to grips with the simplistic gameplay, but there's not a great deal of rewarding action.

LASTABILITY 18%
Racing games require thrills, action and exhilaration to make them worth playing. This hasn't any of those qualities.

VALUE 10%
Vastly overpriced – there are better race games in the budget price range.

OVERALL 17%
Severely lacking action, excitement and a sensible price tag.



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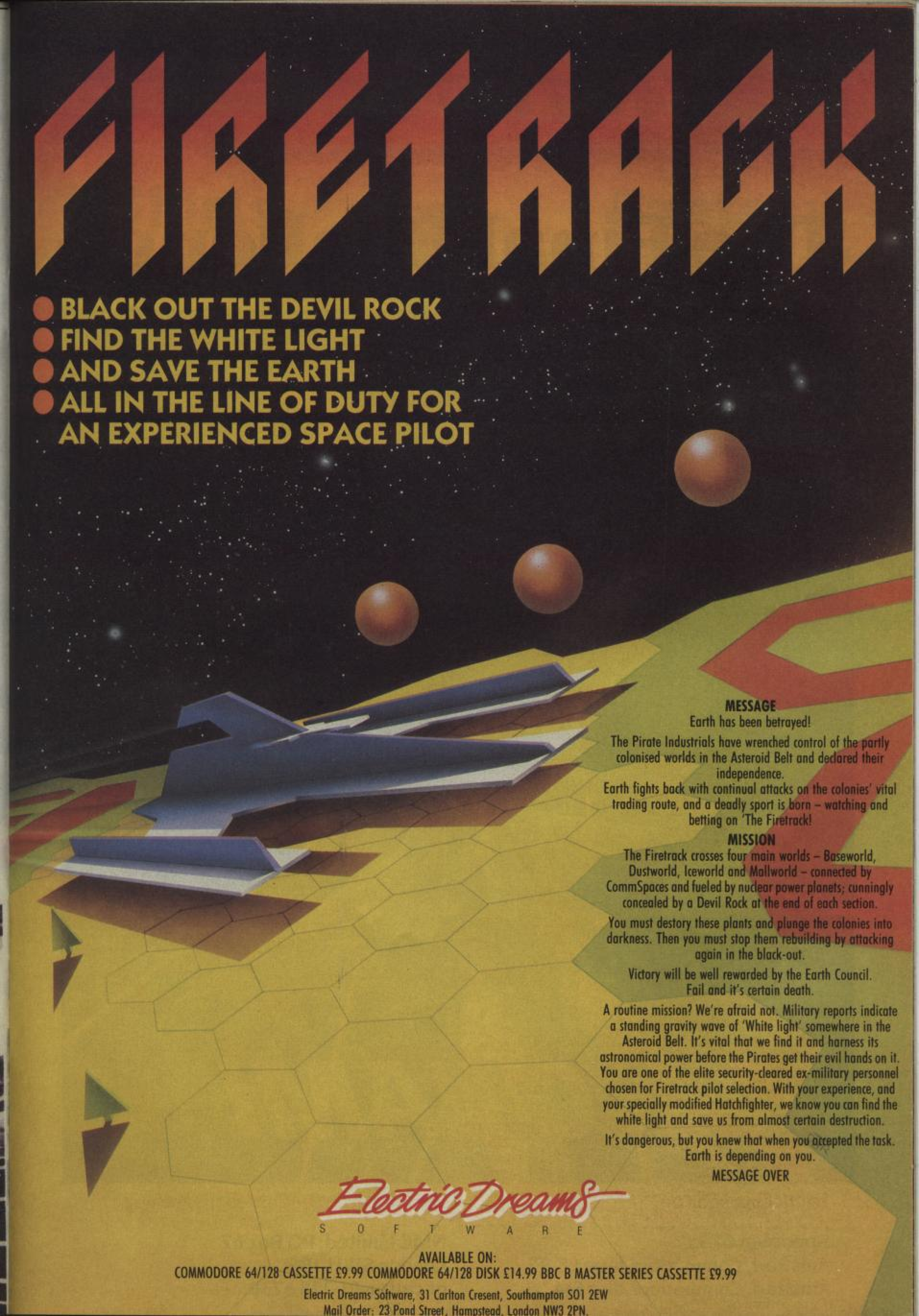
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FIRETRACK
BLACK OUT THE DEVIL ROCK
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AND SAVE THE EARTH
ALL IN THE LINE OF DUTY FOR AN EXPERIENCED SPACE PILOT
MESSAGE
Earth has been betrayed!
The Pirate Industrials have wrenched control of the partly colonised worlds in the Asteroid Belt and declared their independence.
Earth fights back with continual attacks on the colonies' vital trading route, and a deadly sport is born – watching and betting on 'The Firetrack!
MISSION
The Firetrack crosses four main worlds – Baseworld, Dustworld, Iceworld and Mallworld – connected by CommSpaces and fueled by nuclear power planets; cunningly concealed by a Devil Rock at the end of each section.
You must destory these plants and plunge the colonies into darkness. Then you must stop them rebuilding by attacking again in the black-out.
Victory will be well rewarded by the Earth Council. Fail and it's certain death.
A routine mission? We're afraid not. Military reports indicate a standing gravity wave of 'White light' somewhere in the Asteroid Belt. It's vital that we find it and harness its astronomical power before the Pirates get their evil hands on it. You are one of the elite security-cleared ex-military personnel chosen for Firetrack pilot selection. With your experience, and your specially modified Hatchfighter, we know you can find the white light and save us from almost certain destruction.
It's dangerous, but you knew that when you accepted the task. Earth is depending on you.
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ZZAP! COMP

T-Shirts, Books and Games to be won!

Get involved in some Fighting Fantasy, courtesy of GREMLIN GRAPHICS



The latest release from Gremlin Graphics continues the saga of Oriental Action that began with *Way of the Tiger*. *Avenger* T-Shirts, sets of three fantasy adventure books and copies of the game are all on offer by way of a celebration.

Avenger follows the progress of a highly trained ninja whose foster father has been killed by the Demon Grand Master of Flame. You take him through Quench Heart Keep, a fortress that is viewed from above on your Commodore screen. The aim is to locate and kill the three Guardians who live there and return three scrolls stolen from your patron, the God Kwon. It's not easy, as all sorts of nasties live in the Keep and the floors seem to be alive. Great care is needed if the ninja is to survive the gruelling mission.

Lots of care must be taken if you choose to walk the long, winding corridors of ZZAP! Towers, too, as traps and horrid thingies are located throughout the building – serious discomfort can be caused to the careless traveller.

On the Editorial floor, (affectionately known as 'the Chimp Pen') the Spiky Haired Ones lurk, setting traps to keep out unwanted visitors. Sometimes they use the vast bulk of the Gut Guardian – Gary Liddon – to frighten intruders away, but he's not often in Ludlow these days.

Ace lensperson Cameron Pound has been known to use his flash-guns to light up dark nooks and crannies in the hunt for edible material to pacify the Spiky Devils. A full-frontal blast from his 1000Kw studio lights could send a person temporarily blind! Press the shutter on his camera and you could be in trouble . . .

The floor in ZZAP! Towers is alive too, just like the one our faithful ninja travels over. All sorts of creepy crawlies scurry around eating each other and crumbs dropped from the endless stream of grub brought in to feed the reviewing team.

There are some very dodgy floorboards on the way to the tea room and if they are removed you can actually see into the stockroom of the off-licence which is situated just below us. The Spiky Horrors spend a lot of time with the floorboards up trying to fix them using long pieces of string and bent hooks. Sometimes when they return from a long stint of 'carpentry', they can barely stand due to the effort they put in!

Anyway, the **Gremlin** crew are offering five first prizes of the *Avenger*, *Usurper* and *Assassin* adventure books together with an *Avenger* T-Shirt and a copy of the game. Ten runner-up prizes of sets of adventure books are also available, so get hunting through the wordsquare I have lovingly assembled for you, ring round the words you've got to find and send in your entry to **ZZAP! AVENGER EXTRAVAGANZA, PO BOX 10, Ludlow, Shropshire SY8 1DB** making sure it arrives by 12th March.

P	S	C	I	H	P	A	R	G	N	I	L	M	E	R	G
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G	W	N	B	B	R	R	V	C	R	R	O	O	N	T	S
I	D	G	X	A	U	E	A	S	A	O	Y	W	D	U	V
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W	O	D	K	E	T	T	S	U	I	N	T	O	Y	A	W

The words are: GREMLIN GRAPHICS, AVENGER, KWON, YAEMON, WAY OF THE TIGER, SCROLLS, GOD, WOUND, KETTSUIN, VIOLENCE, MONSTER, NINJA, HERO, MAGIC SWORD, STARS, FORTRESS, EXPLORE, REVENGE, WIZARD and EVIL.

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SAY WHAT? RUN THAT BY ME AGAIN . . .

Yes, once again our resident Editor, Gary Penn, takes a look through the pages of Compunet . . .

It was sheer desperation that made me do it – honest. I plead insanity due to diminished responsibility, m'lud. But it had to be done – I had to log on, see. It's not my fault that there isn't much on the net worth mentioning – I've got a poor imagination, see, and I can't think of anything else to write about other than demos. Yeah, demos. Well I suppose could try art . . .

Speaking of art . . . At 215408 there's a directory full of most of Shandor's works to date, including CREEPSHOW, LEGEND, XESS-RENDEZVOUS and TRINITRON. Nothing exceptional, but worth a mention – and a look if you can find the time.

Captain Kirk's directory resides at 203862, and features such binary delights as SCANNERS, PROF DUCK II, THE BEAST, EXPLORERS and STAR TREK. Again, nothing special, but – actually, come to think of it, it's not really worth a mention, so forget it. GOTO 218523 instead, and download LEE'S TERMINATOR – as drawn by LC2. It's not bad at all for a first attempt – see for yourself. I also quite like Kanor's (KAD1) TIME TRAVELLER, as seen on this very page. It's at 210996, if you're interested.

Right – that's it, art-wise . . . Now for news of some demos . . .

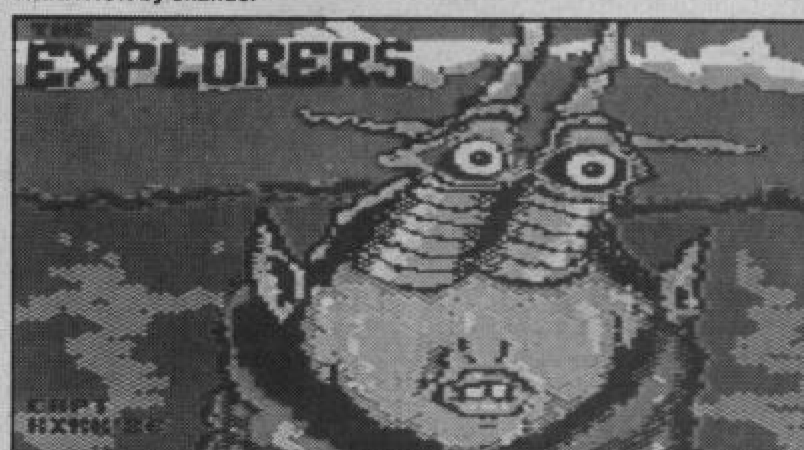
Sitting at 216714 is D/LAIR II . . . AT, a fairly dull demo which features the loading screen and title screen music from Software Projects' latest release. But will we ever see a demo featuring the eight superb pieces of in-game music? . . .

The Mean Team have a new (alright, newish) demo entitled 100W REVENGE MT at 217400, – but it's only worth downloading if you haven't got Rob Hubbard's superb *Light Force* music in any other shape or form. Definitely worth the effort though, is EPILEPSY at 212238. Coded by SPIDEY, it features four Rob Hubbard classics – *Crazy Comets*, *Formula One*, *Sanxion*, and *WAR* – plus sound effects where appropriate. Sprites bop around the screen and can take the form of the Licker sprites from *Iridis Alpha*, dinky little spider symbols or bubbles – as drawn by Hugh Binns. There's also a simple text frame piccy of a spider on its web, courtesy of Spidey. Anyway, it's all very nice, so go and get it – if you haven't already got it.

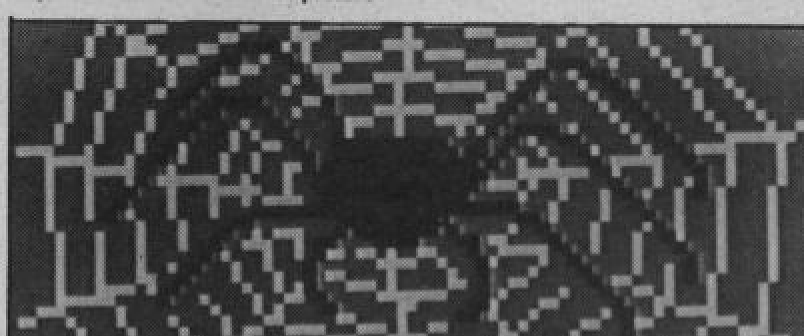
Finally . . . GOTO 217612 and download METAMORPHS – which is also by SPIDEY. It's got this hoopy letter transformation thing (Liddon reckons it's from *Mikie*) accompanied by Rob's *Knucklebusters* music. And it takes less time to download than the Mean Team's hack!



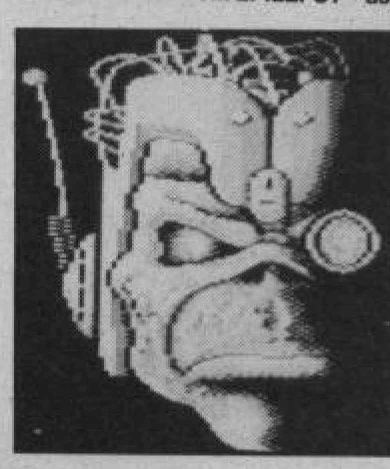
TRINITRON by Shandor



Captain Kirk's EXPLORERS picture



The text screen from EPILEPSY – as drawn and coded by Spidey



TIME TRAVELLER by Kanor



LEE'S TERMINATOR by LC2

RAVING CNET EGOMANIA

Well well well – here's one for the photo-album . . . A pride of CNET personages – most of which I don't recognise. I know Rob is artist Rob Jackson, and Shriggs is Gremlin Graphics programmer Christopher Shriggley. Gi-Jo is none other than Jo Bonar, and Psy is Simon Hulbert. As for the rest . . . God only knows. Just out of interest – who's the young lad between Rob and Shriggs?



PORTAL

Activision, £19.99 disk only, joystick or keys

SHIPS LOG: FINAL ENTRY Date: June 19 2106/Ref 365308B

"I've always been something of a loner. That's why I volunteered for this mission. Yet this empty world below scared me.

I came in over Florida. I knew it had to be Earth. But the broad facilities of Canaveral were nothing more than a grassy field, although the outlines and monuments of the old launch facilities were still there – and seemed to be in good repair.

Now that I've landed I can see that their preservation is less than perfect . . . It's as if everyone had stepped out years ago and not returned."



A lone space pilot has returned from a one hundred year voyage, only to find that every human being on Earth has disappeared. Animals and plants live and grow amongst the rubble of biodegradable buildings, but there are no human remains to give any clues as to what happened. The world is quiet and peaceful.

After months of searching for answers, the pilot finally stumbles upon the entrance to an underground silo. After spending weeks wandering its empty, dust-filled corridors, he discovers a computer terminal with its switch turned to the on position. It is from this point that the player comes into the story . . .

Before the computer can be properly accessed your ID has to be input, in the form of a name or DNA structure. The computer then reads it in an attempt to make an identification. Failure to recognise the input results in the display of an introductory sequence before the computer data is accessed. However, if the name was used in a previous game in which the save feature was used, the computer asks whether or not you would like to continue where the story left off.

When the computer is finally accessed (either at the beginning of a new game, or at the continuation point of an old one), a main display appears with four icons below. Inside the main display area are twelve icons representing the twelve databases within the computer network, which can be scrolled on and off the display using the cursor keys or joystick. The icon which appears in the centre of the area is considered active, and a text read-out at the top of the screen reveals the name of the database it represents. The database can then be accessed by pressing the return key or the joystick fire button.



I'm not surprised that it took two years to produce this unique binary novel – it's obvious that a lot of thought and work has gone into it just from the superbly atmospheric title sequence, and there are five disk-sides worth of story to plough through! However, I found Portal very tiresome to read – mainly because it takes far too long to 'turn the pages'. I'm not overly enthralled by the story itself, either. I lost interest towards the end of side one, and by the time I reached the end of side two I was bored with the whole thing. It's all down to your personal tastes whether you will enjoy this particular type of Science Fiction story or not. But even if you do like the story, you may well find the pace a little too slow for comfort. Full marks for effort, presentation, innovation and execution, Activision – it's a pity that the content doesn't match those qualities.



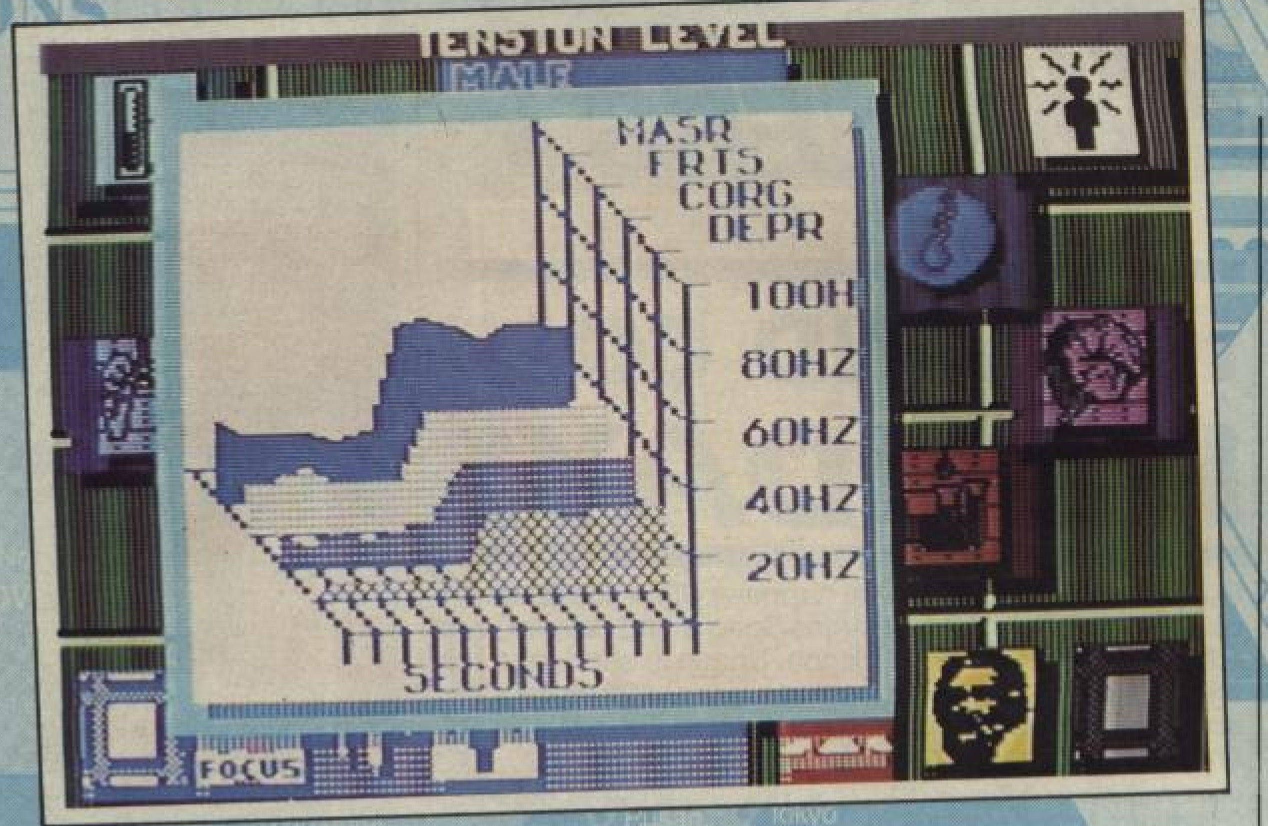
I love this type of Science Fiction story – consequently Portal appeals to me in a very big way. An amazing atmosphere is generated by the superb packaging, graphics and sound, and when you get into the story it's difficult to stop and go and do something else. The sheer depth of the program is absolutely incredible – there's a hundred year summary of history with detailed files of the major events, personality profiles, personality event files and, of course, there's the mystery of the disappearing humans to uncover. What may put people off buying this program is the fact that it's not a computer game: it's an interactive computer novel where you move along a set track. Consequently you can't really influence the action, but it does feel more like you're being dictated instructions by Homer and acting under his guidance. Another point to argue is that once you've played it through you won't want to play it again. But can't the same be said about books or films? Anyway, when you consider that it took around five and a half hours solid playing to finish one side of a disk you can't really moan too much about short-term appeal. I think this is one of the best programs I've played in a long time. Alright, so it's twenty quid, but this is fifty times better than many games we've seen recently which cost half as much. If you've got a disk drive and are into pretentious Science Fiction, this is definitely worth looking up.

The main display area, with Geographical dataspace in view

▽







△ Inside Life Support dataspace. Who is Peter Devore? Oh, he discovered the Portal – but there's more to him, and it, than meets the eye . . . △

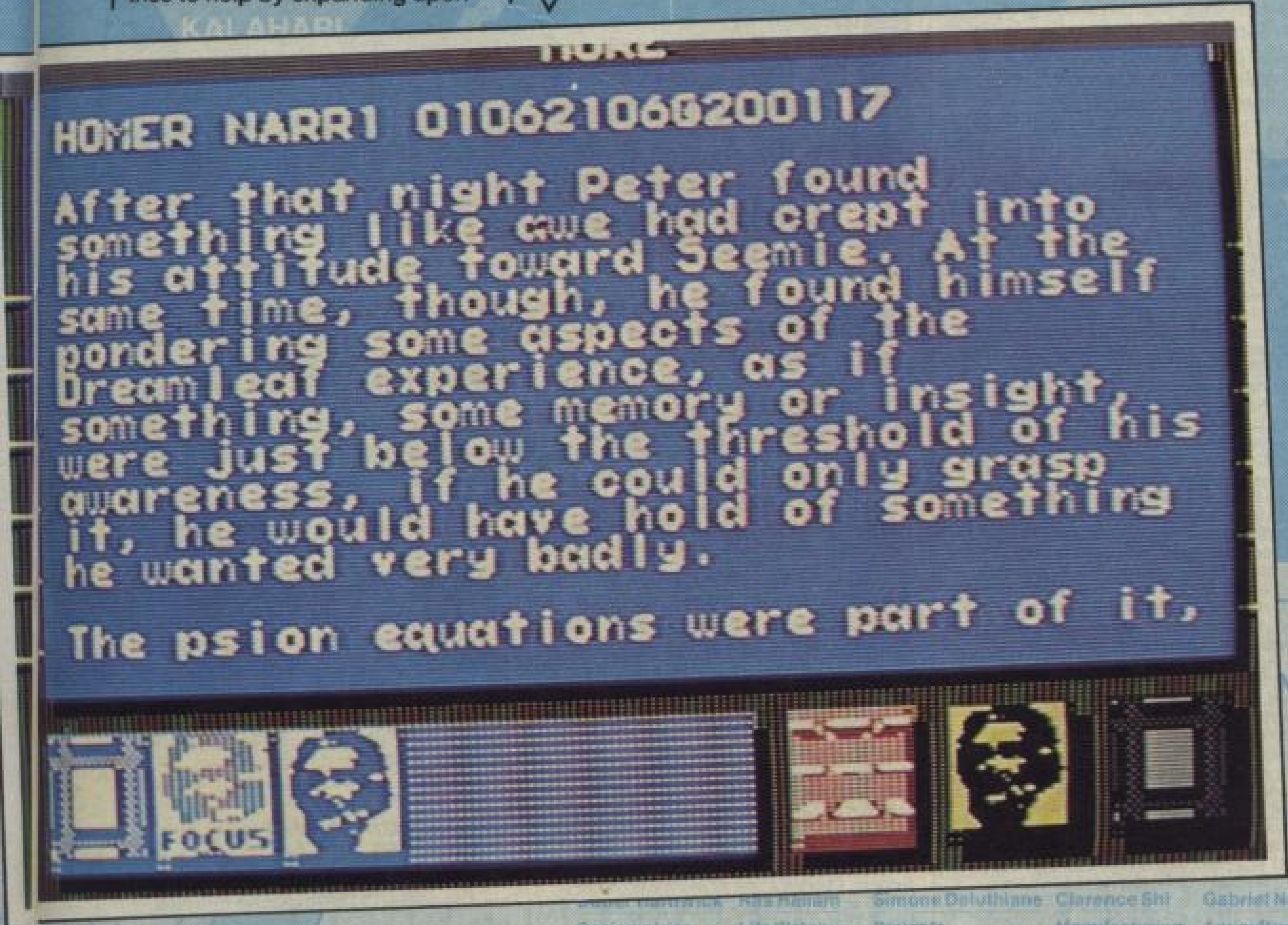
A window containing text files opens up over the main display area when a database is entered. Any of the text files can then be selected and read – the computer adds a tick to a file once it has been accessed so that you know what has been read and what hasn't.

The most important of the twelve databases is Homer – the last active Artificial Intelligence computer on Earth. Homer also wants to discover where all the people have gone (and why), and tries to help by expanding upon any data uncovered – where possible. Though Homer's memory has faded with time, portions of it reopen as you read through the files. A miniature version of the Homer icon resides at the bottom of the screen, and can be accessed at any time for help – even when using another database. Homer's icon flashes to attract your attention if he has anything new to tell you. Accompanying the Homer icon at the bottom of the screen are three other icons: Close Window and Return to Main Display, Close Window and Return to Database, and Save Current Position to disk.

As the story progresses, more and more of the mystery is revealed. The user is also given a detailed insight into the major points of history and the style of social life between 1990 and 2079. Can you uncover the mysteries of *Portal*?

A brief extract from Peter Devore's past, courtesy of Homer who is starting to remember . . .

▽





This is not a computer game, it is a computer novel – and I intend to view it as such. Science Fiction is basically a cinematic art, and only lends itself well to literature in certain forms. For instance an action-packed science western such as 'Return of the Jedi' would not be a particularly good read, whereas a tense atmospheric space thriller along the lines of 'Alien' can transfer beautifully from screen to printed page. Portal **is certainly closer to the latter – yet for some reason it doesn't work. I'm not sure if this is meant to be interactive – if it is, well that's like saying that changing the pages of a paperback gets you involved in the action!** Portal **contains very little atmosphere, moves slowly and builds to an inevitable conclusion with little help (or for that matter, hindrance) from the user. If you are a real enthusiast of the Science Fiction novel it may be worth your while checking this out. Having said that, think of all the Isaac Asimov and Harry Harrison novels you could buy for twenty quid – then make your decision.**

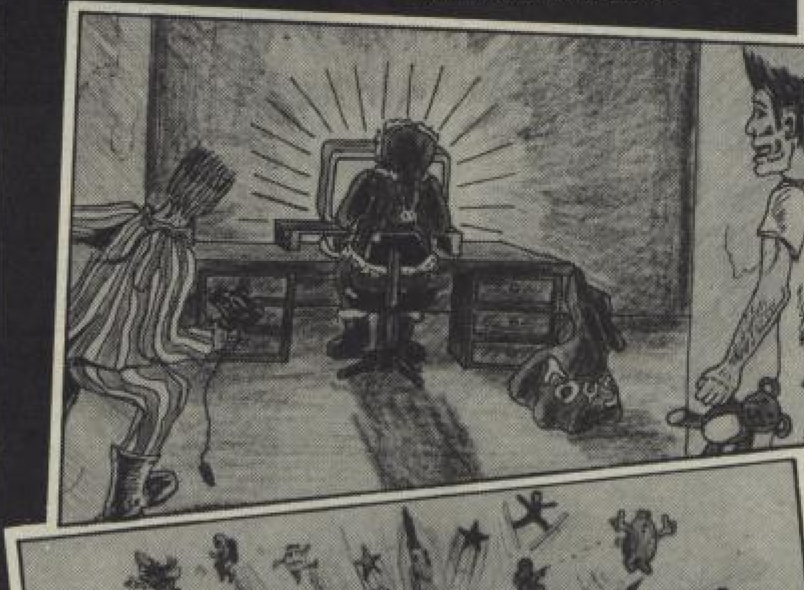
Portal is not a game, it is a computer novel. It would be unfair to compare it in any way with the type of program we normally review – thus there are no ratings. There is no Sizzler or Gold Medal award either, as we felt that *Portal* didn't reach a high enough standard. The three comments are intended as a guideline.

WINNERS: WINNERS: WINNERS: WINNERS:

HAPPY CHRISTMAS MINION

Actually, it wasn't too bad, considering – well, er . . . considering. Anyway, courtesy of ELITE, a BMX bike will be going to **David Hardy** from Nottingham NG5 4LA, and also **Robert Mirfin** from Birmingham B37 7HW. 30 runners up each receive a copy of ELITE's latest, *Space Harrier* . . .

Bob Kingham, London, E17 9EL; Jonathon Rice, Kent, TN17 3DY; Roy Saini, Wolverhampton, WV6 0NH; Jonathon Twist, Lancs, FY5 1PS; Terry O'Hara, Glasgow, G66 1LQ; Chetan Kaddwala, Leicester, LE4 7RZ; Wayne Jones, West Midlands, B68 9AS; Brian Wheeler, Leicestershire, LE16 9LB; Mathew Falkner, Birmingham, B25 8RQ; Kin Wah Yung, Hants, SO2 2JE; Matthius Angos Karn, London, ES 0ER; Shane Stokes, Dublin 16, Ireland; Daniel Rogers, Kenya, East Africa; Lee Neary, Scotland, EH49 6LH; Andrew Luther, Merseyside, L35 0PP; Alex Seymour, Essex, SS8 0DQ; Andrew West, Devon, EX8 3HR; Michael Duncan, Edinburgh, EH8 8DZ; Malcolm Aidoo, London, W11 2RR; Carl Adams, London, SW17 7PS; Thomas Chapman, Herts, SG7 5QE; Gizmo, Worcs, WR14 2ML; Richard Dowling, Cheshire, WA13 0RD; Andrew Jennings, Cambs, PE17 4JU; David M Smith, Birmingham, B30 1RU; Samee Khan, London, E14 6NB; Steven Irvine, Hants, PO16 0UL; Alan Lowney, County Cork, Republic of Ireland; Ian Jones, Northants, NN10 9YQ; Anthony Williamson, Staffordshire, ST6 8JZ





HOT AND COLD HOLIDAYS

Busy Busy Busy. That's what happens when you have lots of competitions in the Christmas Special and have to earn a living as a Competition Minion. Space is short, and my fingers are bleeding from opening all your entry envelopes, so I'll cut the typing down to a minimum and get straight on with the names of the lucky prizewinnners . . .

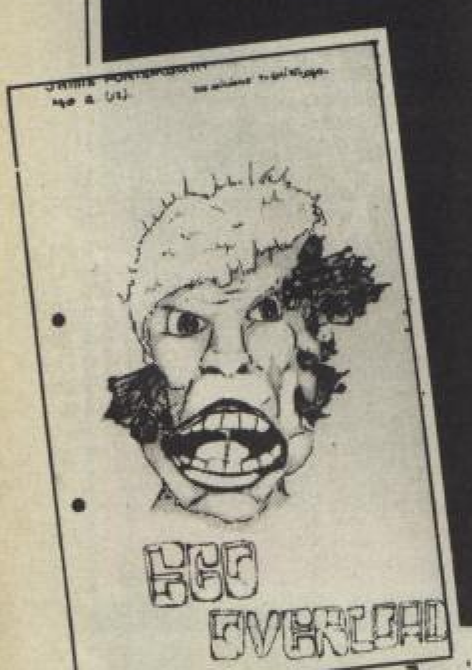
Mark Watkins from Bucks HP7 9BB has won himself a Hot or Cold holiday worth up to £600, courtesy of INCENTIVE. Well done, Mark. The following 10 runners up get an to choose an INCENTIVE game to entertain themselves with . . .

Mr T R Broadhurst, Cheshire, WA3 5PT; Jake Barayev, London, N15 6NJ; Derek Tumman, Oxon, OX7 1AB; Cathy Belton, Sussex, BN5 9PR; Craig Dibble, Worcs, WR9 7RF; Michael A Jones, Eastbourne, BN20 7RG; Christopher Pritchard, Rotherham, S60 5NG; Alex Ainley, London, NW4 3SD; Joel Jons, Mid Glamorgan, CF42 6PG; Patrick Juel M, Copenhagen. N 2200, Denmark

ALL DRESSED IN BLACK

KONIX offered a Commodore disk drive and an MPS printer to the person who could come up with the most imaginative T-shirt design *pour moi*. **Jamie Portsmouth** from Newcastle-Upon-Tyne NE3 1AQ provided the bestest entry – Ego Overload – so he wins the disk drive and printer. The following 20 runners up each receive a KONIX Speedking Joystick . . .

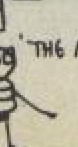
K Sangwell, Wilts, SN14 0DE; Robert Mir-Fin, Birmingham, B37 7HW; Rene Van Der Woude, Ghos Hr Assen, Holland; Conor Hughes, Co Wexford, Ireland; Graham Simpson, Kent, DA7 6DB; Mark J Robinson, Yorkshire, BD20 9AB; Paul Ward, North Yorkshire, YO22 4LR; Richard Miller, Lancs, OL6 8BX; David Thomas, Stockbridge, Hants; James Banks, Leicester, LE5 0RH; Gordon Smith, Scotland, ML3 7XX; Shahed Miah, London, N1 8DL; Miss Christine Barron, London, E17 7AD; Richard Ansell, Kent, TN11 8QH; Peter Skelton, Co Down, Northern Ireland, BT21 0PQ; Jonathon Twist, Lancs, FY5 1PS; Mr J Warner, Watford, Herts; Thomas McCreery, Scotland, G67 4JE; Nathan Rodger, Belfast, Northern Ireland, BT14 6LT; Max Dennison, Co Limerick, Ireland



DON'T LEAVE ROCKY – PLEEEZE . . .

Unfortunately, the little beggar didn't. But that's beside the point – DATABYTE were generous enough to offer a T-Shirt and a copy of their Gold Medal game *Boulderdash Construction Kit* to the 50 people who provided, in my humble opinion, the most amusing profiles on our margin mini-megastar, Rocky Rockford. Well, here they are . . .

Mr M S Watson, Lincolnshire, LN12 2DU; Marcus Rowell, Scotland, EH16 5XJ; David Hardy, Nottingham, NG5 4LA; J R Kitchen, Sutton Coldfield, B75 6SP; Howard Joseph, Kent, ME19 5PS; David Oliver, Northumberside, NE25 0JF; Anssi Einonen, 20880 Turku 88, Finland; Carleton Shaw, London, N10 3HT; Niels E Rasmussen, 8000 Aarhus C, Denmark; Andrew Waters, Aberdeen, AB1 0JS; Stephen Butterfield, West Yorkshire, WF4 2PJ; William Humphries, Hants, PO9 1RS; Neil Collingham, Nottingham, NG11 6BS; Ricky Mehta, Middlesex, HA3 8JZ; Mark Davis, Eastbourne, BN23 7BP; Michael Curran, Glasgow, G51 1DP; Bernard Donohoe, Middlesex, HA3 5JA; Alex Cohen, London, N20 8PS; Tom McKee, Ross-shire, N7 8EW; Chris Swallow, Notts, NG21 0AS; Javaid Aslam, Manchester, M20 8ED; Stephen Griggs, Kent, M17 1UX; Michael Rufian Jnr, London, N20 0XG; Jonathon Twist, Lancs, FY5 1PS; Darron Walker, Kent, CT6 6EL; Jonathon Walters, Hull, HU7 5BU; Mark Bayross, Kent, TN11 9BW; Ehab Abbass, Cairo, Egypt; Paul Humphries, Kent, ME10 4UW; L Keen, Herts, SG1 4PB; Mark Watkins, Bucks, HP7 9BB; Disma Hills, Oxon, OX8 5BN; Richard Ward, Birmingham, B30 1LZ; Keith Hazlehurst, West Midlands, B70 9HG; Nathan Bradley, Lancs, BL4 9HB; Steven Irvine, Hants, PO16 0UL; Paul Hough, London, N21; Ashvin Haji, London, E11 2NT; James Laurie, Northampton, NN7 4LJ; Seth Ward, West Midlands, B73 5ST; Pier Pistocchi, Sussex, RH16 3AL; Duncan Caddick, West Midlands, B71 3QT; Daniel Lavers, Kent, TN27 8LZ; Richard Miller, Lancashire, OL6 8BX; Philip Dobbie, Durham, DH1 1NH; Jonathon Dyson, Leicester, LE2 3GD; Damian Coughlan, Limerick, Eire; David Cambear, West Glamorgan, SA27 7HE; Courtney Blackman, Bucks, MK3 6LL; D Porter, Herts, AL8 7AP



CHRISTMAS JIGSAW

GREMLIN GRAPHICS put some hi-tech equipment up for grabs. **Mr J Hearn** from Bucks HP21 9XD collects the Philips compact disc cum midi-hi-fi system that was offered as top prize in the jigsaw competition. The second prize of a Sharp Ghetto Blaster goes to **Stuart Wardale** from Liverpool L10 0AG, and a third prize of five GREMLIN games goes to **Gabriel Odia** from Manchester M8 7PN. 25 runners up each receive their choice of a GREMLIN game . . .

John Bennett, London, SE10 0JJ; Anthony Farmery, West Yorks, LS27 0EQ; Stephen Luddy, Hants, PO2 7JQ; Alison Roe, Norfolk, NR13 4JJ; Jason Sims, Dorset, BH21 2NG; Mr G J White, Northampton, NN2 2QG; Jason Lowden, Lancashire, BB12 9PG; Stephen Pang, Kent, BR5 4NJ; Thomas Barlow, Douglas, Isle of Man; Karl Smith, Cheshire, WA2 0SR; John Brodie, Notts, DN22 7EU; Timothy Black, Nr Wakefield, WF4 2AD; Brian McGee, Co Tyrone, BT71 4LL; Martin Kasbo, 1870 Orse, Norway; Angela Howard, Herts, EN11 9EE; Robert Engstrom, 08500 Lohsa As, Finland; Peter Carolan, Belfast 14, BT14 6QT; Mark Duckworth, Bolton, BL1 6BL; Eriek Solheim, 5050 Nesttun, Norway; Michael Burton, Cleveland, TS7 8RR; Michael Hutchins, Kent, TN29 0LR; Stephen Bruce, Kent, ME3 9DH; Mark Shickell, Peterborough, PE8 4NF; Mr K W Yung, Hants, SO2 2JE; Nicholas Howell, Glos, GL5 3TX

A SOFTWARE WARDROBE!

After hours on the telephone, I persuaded umpteen software houses to chip in goodies, including T-Shirts, sweatshirts, and games. These were then split into three 'size' groups, Small, Medium, and Large, tucked into trendy Ocean Tote Bags and offered as prizes – the following three persons collect one 'size' each . . . **Steven Wilson Campbell** from Northern Ireland BT44 9HP, **Glenn Forster** from Kent ME9 0HJ, and **Jeffrey Preou**, Essex CM7 6PT

I WANT TO HAVE SPIKY HAIR TOO

Coo. **James Wintle** from Oxon OX9 7QX will soon be able to act the pra . . . er, part of a ZZAP! reviewer. James' entry was the first out of the correct entries bag, so he gets a 14" colour telly, a Mickey Mouse alarm clock, a can of styling mousse and a can of hair lacquer, a hairdryer, a brush, and a Monty on the Run jog-suit, plus a complete set of ZZAP! 64's, a year's subscription AND a binder. Phew. Five runners up each receive a can of hair mousse and a Monty on the Run jog-suit . . .

Matthew Brimelow, Cheshire, SK16 5LL; Ehab Abbass, Cairo, Egypt; Anssi Einonen, 20880 Rurku 88, Finland; Jamie Fellingham, Middlesex, HA4 9RF; Andrew Mansell, West Sussex, RH19 4JL

YOUTHFUL LACKIES

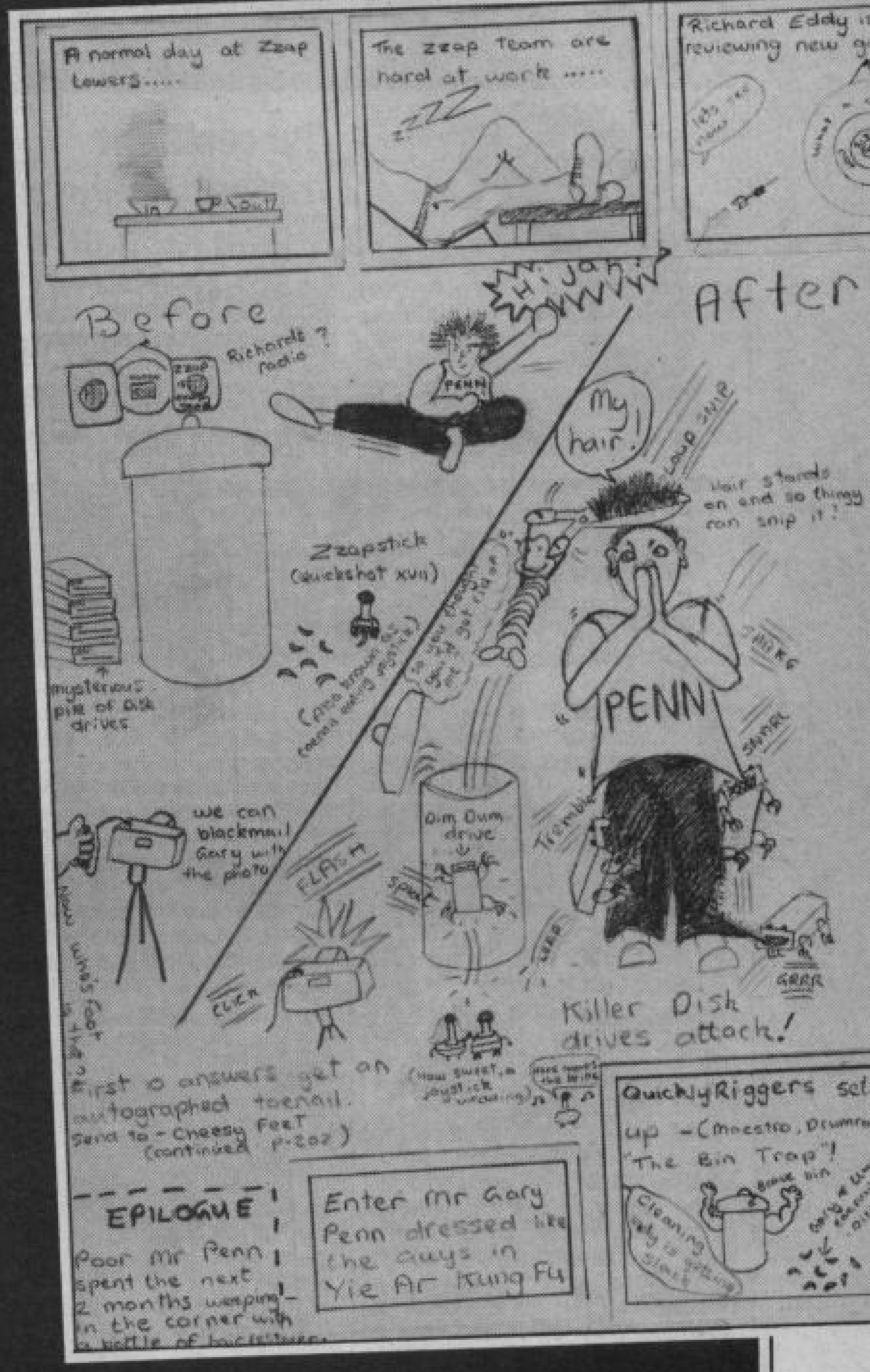
Someone called **Gizmo** from Worcs WR14 2ML has won him (or possibly her or even it) self a Sony Walkman and copy of HEWSON's latest release, *Firelord*. Five second prizes of a copy of *Firelord* and a cassette rack go to: **John Pettigrew** from Scotland KY8 5DQ, **Christopher Mungall** from Scotland, DD6 8DE, **Shane Stokes** from Dublin 16, Ireland, **Garry McSweeney** from London E13 0PE, and **G Shirodkar**, West Midlands, DY6 9PJ. 25 runners up each receive a copy of *Firelord* and a poster . . .

David Connor, Liverpool, L30 1PQ; David Fairweather, Lancashire, BB3 3AZ; Steven Lodsham, Cheshire, WA7 6AA; Charles Owen, Scotland, KY16 8AB; M Gattie, Cheshire, WA16 8QH; Paul Grouch, Essex, CM1 5BH; Adrian McDonald, Swansea, West Glamorgan; Thomas Chapman, Herts, SG7 5QE; J Johannsson, Victoria, Australia 3103; P Conway, Glos, GL7 2EH; David Conibear, West Glamorgan, SA2 7HE; Simon Evetts, Cambs, CB2 4QP; Ashvin Haji, London, E11 2NT; Karim Bouali, London, SW17 8LD; Damon Smith, Herts, WD2 6LE; Steve Wynne-Jones, Birmingham, B28 8DH; Finlay Bell, Northumberland, NE48 3PZ; G J Bowman, Cambs, CB6 2NR; Paul Reynolds, Ireland; David Alan Ashcroft, Wirral, L45 9JU; Stuart Price, Scotland, KY8 5BX; Assad Khaishgi, Karachi, Pakistan; Anthony Greaves, London, W7 1QQ; Javaid Aslam, Manchester, M20 8ED; Mark Stevens, Hertfordshire, CM23 4EY

STOP GAZ PRATTING ABOUT

Simon Green from Clifton, Bristol 8 will shortly be receiving a goodiebag containing records and things, courtesy of ARIOLASOFT. 25 runners up get a special ARIOLASOFT T-Shirt . . .

Brandon Appleby, Tyne and Wear, SR5 1DS; Aten Skinner, Dartford, DA4 0EJ; Mninder Heer, Leicester, LE3 1AX; Brad Logan, Manningtree, Essex; Martin O Gorman, Cheshire, SK10 2JD; Michael Wirken, Souupa Tilburg, Holland; Stuart Tavener, Cleveland, TS9 5DD; H Dhimar, London, NW10 4ST; Fraser Jamieson, Dumfries, DG1 1QR; C Cannon, South Yorkshire, S66 7BE; Anthony Gisbourne, West Midlands, WV10 7HR; Matthew Dobson, Lancs, LA5 9DH; Gary Lewis, Walthamstow, E17 9DF (L); Craig Dibble, Worcs, WR9 7RF; D Priest, Gloucester, GL1 5JB; Ajoy Dua, Middlesex, UB5 4SE; Alan Lowney, Co Cork, Ireland; John Davies, Surrey, KT11 1AJ; Jamie Paton, Dundee, Tayside; Tracy Enright, Kent, ME1 3ND (M); Simon Cox, Birmingham, B42; Jon Mathews, Wolverhampton; Mark Crosby, Newcastle Upon Tyne, NE3 3TD; K Norman, Kent, DA1 2NN; Christopher Willett, Staffordshire, ST5 0JE



DAKKA DAKKA DURELL

Jonathon Edwards from Merseyside WA10 6JD wins a radio-controlled aeroplane and his choice of a DURELL game for spotting some differences. The Spiky Haired Ones play a different game – coming into the office every day sporting different spots! The following 25 runners up each receive their choice of a DURELL game . . .

Wayne Brook, West Yorkshire, LS28 7NA; Michael McLoughlin, Lancs, PR5 0DT; Peter Hynds, Essex, SS1 8ER; John Tomlinson, North Humberside, DN14 6JX; Kevin Eagle, Kent, BR7 6AT; David Stephens, Uckfield, TN22 3DT; Michael Moore, Co Antrim, Nor thern Ireland, BT53 7LG; David Fox, North Yorkshire, BD23 1AZ; Kevin Murphy, Fife, KY1 1PX; Christopher Linton, Cumbria, LA14 3ER; Chris Sutherland, Scotland, EH4 8HG; Zubin Kazak, London, E5 8HG; Cam Evans, London, SW19 2TG; Philip Proybyn, Essex, CM3 4HT; R B Parker, North Yorkshire, BD23 3ET; Richard Sykes, West Yorkshire, BD16 1LB; A Waters, Aberdeen, AB1 0JS; Mr P C Clift, Glos, GL13 9NB; Mark Ashman, Wst Midlands, Ws8 7AQ; Brett Buckley, West Yorks, HD4 7LS; Matthew S Jones, North Wales, LL53 8NU; Aviar Sidhu, West Yorkshire, HX1 3XL; Terry Hull, Merseyside, WA9 4AY; Gary Lewis, Walthamstow, E17 9DF; John Curtis, Surrey, RH8 0QS

GAUNTLET COMPETITION

No, the word square was fine. No, *Forbidden Forest* wasn't a printing error. Yes, there were 22 game names and seven ZZAP! personages hidden in the wordsquare. And yes, someone has won the *Gauntlet* arcade machine as donated by US GOLD. Who's won it? . . . **Stuart Osgood** from Buckinghamshire MK13 7NQ, that's who. Yes, Stuart will have to make room for one hefty son-of-a . . . er, *Gauntlet* arcade machine. Anyroad – 50 runners up will be getting a copy of US GOLD's conversion of *Gauntlet* . . .

J Husbands, Lancashire, OL4 4RR; Jason Carroll, Mid Glamorgan, CF46 5BS; Robert Gray, Cambs, PE7 1AR; M Blackler, Lancaster, LA1 4TY; David Hodkinson, South Humberside, DN34 5TZ; Bryan D Millar, Scotland, DD8 1HW; Chris McLean, Cheshire, WA6 9PJ; Damian Cardlan, London, N4 3BA; Darran Higgins, Scotland, FK3 8BE; Neil Halk, Middlesex, TW18 2SH; Vijay Chothi, London, SE15 2BU; Keith Rippon, Lancashire, PR4 0YD; Daniel Hallett, Leicester, LE4 3GG; Richard Weller, East Sussex, BN26 6RF; Mike Ahlers, Weesp, The Netherlands, 1381 VV; Andrew White, Wilts, SN12 8RJ; Mark Macpherson, Stirlingshire, FK5 3DG; Mikko Taskinen, 20880 Turko, Finland; A Watson, Perth, WA Australia, 6009; Richard Pumfrett, Essex, 1G6 2NW; Stephen Conway, Middlesex, UB4 9DQ; Mark Dodwell, Dorset, BH23 5LS; Chris Gawor, London, N8 8LD; Mr J Macdonald, Cheshire, CW10 0EU; Harendra N Patel, Essex, IG4 5EP; Paul Norris, London, E17 9EH; Migel G Paton, Fife, DD6 8PQ; Andrew Langley, Dorset, BH18 9LL; Robert Syrad, Dorset, BH18 9BU; Michael Bennett, Hants, BH25 5LP; Boris Lowinger, London, N6 5DW; Ian Price, Kent, ME17 4QP; Peter Davies, South Glamorgan, CF6 8DN; Graeme Calrk, Lancs, OL15 0BT; Mrs T New, Hants, PO9 3PX; Kezz Blake, Peterborough, PE8 5LU; David Rogers, Worcs, B60 1QJ; Matthew Wake, Surrey, GU9 0HX; Andrew Feeney, Lancashire, BB1 1DN; Steven Porteous, Scotland, FK5 3LX; Michael Rufian, London, N20 0XG; Andrew Swann, Coventry, CV3 6JP; Richard Kirk, Derbyshire, S40 3DR; Jonathon Head, Manchester, M19 2EZ; Mika Sieranta, 37800 Toijala, Finland; Colin Hayward, East Sussex, TN22 2AX; Neil Brownlee, Scotland, TD1 2EL; Jonathon Tinker, West Yorkshire, HD7 3EE; Robert Uphill, Berks, RG13 4XD; Jonathon Eggelton, Milton Keynes, MK3 6PP

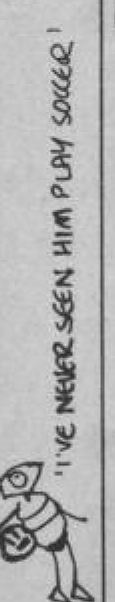
ZZAP! FU COMPETITION

IMAGINE will soon be sending a copy of *Yie Ar Kung Fu II* to each of the following 50 people . . . Ah So. ever since the game arrived in ZZAP! Towers, the Spiky devils have been demanding Oo-Long Tea in the mornings. How I'm supposed to find such oriental delicacies in Ludlow I don't know!

Charles Owen, Fife, KY16 8AB; Neil Lambert, Merseyside, L46 2QZ; Lee Chambers, Kent, BR2 6HG; Trevor Baguley, Manchester, M20 0GD; Lee Cafferkey, Wiltshire, BA14 0JB; Nigel Underwood, Berkshire, RG4 7PH; Jake Barajev, London, N16 6NJ; Sohail Ashraf, Edinburgh, EH10 4ET; Simon Jaques, Essex, SS2 4UN; Darren Richardson, Belfast, BT8 4RJ; Rodney Cowman, Warwickshire, CV11 4NY; Courtney Balckman, Bucks, MK3 6LL; I Churcher, West Yorkshire, WF1 5LG; David Lee, Leicester, LE9 5BR; Colin Hayward, East Sussex, TN22 2AX; Matthew Rawlinson, Lancs, BB6 9DZ; Iaian Keir, Manchester, M29 7BL; Henry Hau, Kent, TN23 1LN; Mark Hanson, Middlesex, HA8 9AB; Mark Graham, Dunbartonshire, G84 7HF; Paul Gallagher, Kent, BR2 9PG; Graham Gale, Hants, S052 9NS; G McLean, Sussex, RH17 5ER; Wayne Jones, Warley, B68 9AS; B D Everingham, Essex, RM3 9XB; Edward Coyne, London, SW1P 1ER; Ben Jelf, Derbyshire, DE4 3RL; Beejal Patel, London, SW17 8LN; Paul Slack, Notts, NG19 0LU; Timothy Pates, London, E10 5PZ; John Park, Scotland, KY11 4RG; M Loizon, Middlesex, HA5 1SH; Fauzan Mirza, London, SW16 3DL; Alan Strawbridge, Dorset, DT4 9JN; D Mitchell, Hants, SO2 9QF; Robin Badcock, West Yorks, WF2 6AF; Nicholas Owens, Prestatyn, Clwyd; Nick Bromley, London, NW3 2NL; J Tyrell, Liverpool, L4 0UD; Mark Hobbs, Tyne and Wear, NE31 2AL; Ian Harrison, Essex, RM1 4AH; Neil Maidment, Essex, CM12 0QW; Andrew Edwards, Leicester, LE7 8LU; Bobby Singh, Newcastle Upon Tyne, NE4 8AT; Matthew Cave, Warks, CV11 4TH; John Patrick Wallace, Surrey, RH1 3ER; James Johnston, Co Durham, DL4 2EY; Simon Green, Clifton, Bristol 8; P Hinchy, Lancs, M27 3AJ; M Garnett, Yorks, LS13 4DY

ZZAP! TEST

A COMPLETELY NEW BALL GA





Our resident football hooligan, Julian Rignall, looks at four of the latest footballing games and gives his verdict . . .

FOOTBALLER OF THE YEAR

Gremlin Graphics, £9.95 cass

This program started out as the design for a traditional board game, before Gremlin snapped it up and turned it into a computer game.

You start off as an ambitious seventeen-year-old footballer with a burning desire to become Footballer of the Year. All you have to help you achieve this goal is £5,000 in cash, ten goal cards and of course . . . your feet!

First of all you have to decide which of the five divisions you wish to play in – the higher the division, the tougher the going. However, a player from the lower divisions is unlikely to win the Footballer of the Year competition, so the choice must be made very carefully.

The action begins after you've made your selection and chosen a team. The screen displays seven easy-to-use icons: a Globe, a Footballer's Head, a Scroll, a Question Mark, a Football Boot, a Disk and a Dead Footballer. The first two options can be accessed to reveal the league position and morale of your team, your financial and personal status and the number of goals you've scored – the Disk and Dead Footballer icons are are used to load/save or quit a game respectively. The other three icons form the action section of the program.

The Question Mark conceals 'incident cards' which cost £200 each. When the icon is accessed, an incident occurs and a card is displayed – money can be won or lost, transfers obtained and extra goal cards collected depending on the card 'turned'. The Scroll icon gives the player the chance to buy a transfer opportunity, although this option is a bit pricey – £2,000 to £10,000 depending on which division you're in.

The final icon, the Boot, leads to the football field. Selecting it reveals the player's financial situation and offers the chance to buy more goal cards. The computer chooses the match, and decides the number of shots the player gets at goal if a card is cashed in (between one and three shots per match). A short arcade sequence follows, in which the player gets to shoot at the goalmouth after having positioned the ball. Occasionally, defenders try to intercept the attack, forcing the player to make a snap decision about where to place his shot. When all the shots have been taken the result is printed on a teleprinter and the main menu is displayed once more. Fxperience is gained as the seasc. . ~rresses, and depending on how you and your team play you could well win promotion. You might even have the opportunity to play for your country, and maybe, just maybe, you could win the coveted position of Footballer of the Year . . .

To give credit where credit's due, *Footballer of the Year* is simple to use and fun to play. Unfortunately it has one large drawback – it's far too easy. The problem lies with the way that the game works – you can continually select incident cards until you have hundreds of thousands of pounds in your bank account and loads of goal cards. Another annoying aspect is that if you collect more than 99 goal cards, the counter returns to zero and they're lost – what a stinker. Graphically and aurally the game is alright, and there's enough interest generated to keep a football fan happy for a couple of days. Whether or not this amount of entertainment is worth a tenner is entirely up to you . . .





PRESENTATION 86%
HOOKABILITY 78%
LASTABILITY 51%
VALUE 56%
OVERALL 64%

PETER SHILTON'S HANDBALL MARADONA

Argus Press Software, £6.95 cass

First of all let us get a few things straight. This is an arcade style goalkeeping simulation which features neither Peter Shilton nor our groping Argentinian chum, Diego Maradona. The object of the game is to progress through sixteen skill levels, ignoring the usual footballing distractions such as the league or cup.

A team is chosen from the list provided and the player's initials typed in. When this compulsory faffing about is over and done with, a menu appears displaying four options: Practice Session, Play Game, Skill Upgrading and Restart Game. If the former option is chosen the player has to survive five attacks from the opposition. A panoramic view of the pitch is displayed, with the goal and goalie at the top of the screen. Two fat-kneed sprites posing as your defence wander about aimlessly, while the opposition plough their way towards the goal, eventually hoofing the ball in your direction. This is where the player comes into the action. Using either the joystick or keys to control the keeper's action, the player has to save the shot.

The 'Play Game' option runs along similar lines, this time in 'match' conditions. The game is split into two halves, consisting of four attacks each. Your team scores randomly – it's up to you to make sure the opposition don't. When the final whistle has blown, the score is displayed and the action returns to the main menu.

The final option, 'Skill Upgrade', requires you to save four shots. If you do, the skill level is upped by one, and a code is given which can be input the next time you load the program. Thus, you can immediately jump to the level you finished on in the previous game.

The program includes 'speech' (although it sounds like a Dalek



GAME?

with Laryngitis) and assaults the ear with such gems as 'petashiltunhanballmaradona' (to tell the world it's loaded), and 'goal' and 'save' to inform any blind spectators of the proceedings. The graphics are reasonable, although the sprite players tend to look rather like good old Diego himself, ie: as wide as they are tall.

The biggest drawback is that the program is severely limited. It's great fun trying to keep goal, but once you've played a couple of times it becomes apparent that there are a very limited number of attack patterns. There are only three different options and they're all very similar, offering little in the way of reward or objective. It's a shame that the program is seven quid – it's vastly overpriced and not really worth buying. A budget price would have been far more sensible for the couple of hours entertainment that it offers.

PRESENTATION 71%
HOOKABILITY 76%
LASTABILITY 32%
VALUE 30%
OVERALL 38%

THE DOUBLE

Scanatron, £9.95 cass

In *The Double* you take the role of a football manager, at the beginning of his contract with a third division team. From this lowly position the player has to become as successful as possible, either by building up his team and winning promotion or by becoming manager of one of the top first division clubs. The program encompasses many aspects of a manager's job and the player has to select the team for each match played, make administrative and financial decisions including transfers, crowd control and staff wages. A system of menus and sub-menus is used to make the selections. This also allows the player to view statistics including the league tables, fixtures and results for all three divisions, current team selected, injury and scout reports and the financial situation of the club.

When the team has been picked and the rest of the week's business sorted out, you can watch a simulation of its fixtures (or select another fixture if you wish to see how other teams are faring). The match is played over a scrolling pitch and takes about fifteen minutes to play. All twenty-two players play an active part in the game and there is a running commentary to tell you who's 'on the ball'. When the match has finished, the results and attendance figures for each of the day's matches are printed out, and the program returns to the main menu where the week's decisions and problems can be tackled afresh.

This all looks fine on paper, but unfortunately *The Double* has a rather large block over which it stumbles and falls – the speed at which it operates. The program is so slow at making decisions it's ridiculous. For example, when you've selected your team, the program selects eleven players for each of the other teams in the league, taking about a second or so to select each. Next comes the match itself, and this is snail city. Twenty-two inept and badly deformed UDG players wearing lead boots shuffle over a crudely drawn pitch seemingly covered in tar. The screen takes about half a second to update and it's difficult not to turn off the Commodore when you realise you've got to sit through fifteen minutes of this travesty.

Luckily you can opt to go straight through to the results screen without having the torture of sitting through a match, but there's little consolation when you find out it takes ten seconds to print out *one* ruddy result. That makes a grand total of seven minutes waiting time until all results are sorted through, and that doesn't include the unnecessarily long attendance list which is printed out afterwards. After sitting through this tortuous rigmarole twice, I felt an incredibly strong urge to put my foot through the TV screen. It's a bit of a shame really because if it wasn't for the unbelievably slow speed I'd thoroughly recommend the program – there are loads of options and just about all aspects of the managerial role have been included. However, the sluggish speed clinically removes every last ounce of enjoyment, making it incredibly tedious and frustrating to play. If you want a good strategy game then buy *Football Manager*, it's several leagues above this.

PRESENTATION 89%
HOOKABILITY 29%
LASTABILITY 12%
VALUE 12%
OVERALL 17%

BRIAN CLOUGH'S FOOTBALL FORTUNES

CDS Software, £14.95 cass, £17.95 disk

This doesn't try to accurately simulate a footballing role. It's not an arcade football game either. 'What is it then?' I hear you cry, exasperated at the totally inept way the suspense is being built up. Well, oh long-suffering reader, it's a two to five player *board game* over which the computer presides. The objective is simple enough: to become as strong as successful as possible – and achieving this takes some neat decision making, a large amount of wheeling and dealing, and a fair bit of luck.

Each player takes a managerial position over their favourite club and is given £200,000. The computer randomly generates a team of thirteen, and the player takes the corresponding cards from a pack of players. Every footballer has a 'star rating' between one and five, five being the best. The player adds up his/her total star rating for both attack and defence so that it can be typed into the computer before a match.

The wheeling and dealing can start when all the formalities have been dispensed with. The computer 'throws' the die and prints a random number on screen – the player then moves his/her counter around the board. Each square on the board represents a situation in between matches with which the manager has to deal. There are nine different squares which fall into three different categories: financial (could be a gain or loss of money); auction (where a player card is turned over and the managers bid for it) and luck (the computer throws up a random situation which can either be beneficial or disastrous for the club involved).

The week's matches are played once all the counters have been moved. The fixtures can be viewed so that managers can loan or borrow players, and once the wheeling and dealing is through the star rating for each player is typed into the computer. The results and gate receipts are printed out on a 'teleprinter', and the action returns to the board.



The computer keeps details of all results, and the league can be displayed at any time. It also awards points depending on the player's managerial abilities and at the end of the game (a game can be any number of seasons long), the display also includes points amassed and eventually – the winner.

This is a very socially interactive game – such delights as screaming, shouting, persecution complexes, losing friends, and falling to the floor and frothing at the mouth because your two star players have been killed in a car crash are all part and parcel of this excellent board game. It's easy to use and beautifully designed so that even the most ardent anti-football person cannot help but enjoy it. It is a little pricey, but when compared with the expensive gimmicky tosh hiding behind the 'family board game' facade that's being churned out onto the toy market at the moment, it's a pretty good investment . . . as long as you lock up your knife cupboard and hide Grandma's knitting needles!

PRESENTATION 99%
HOOKABILITY 96%
LASTABILITY 95%
VALUE 80%
OVERALL 93%

A SENSIBLE INTERVIEW . . . .



Pictures by Tania Copsey

Programmer Chris Yates and graphics designer John Hare – Sensible Software, a gruesome twosome if ever there was one. Bursting with innovation and talent . . . In a matter of months they progressed from the silly scenario of an aged and unoriginal shoot 'em up – *Galaxibirds* – to an equally silly but far more original arcade game called *Wizball*. They don't have an axe to grind – but they do have some sharp opinions about the state of the software industry . . . as Gary Penn found out in a lengthy and somewhat harrowing interview.

Sensible Software



GP Tell me about *Wizball*.

JH We were originally going to do *Wizball* before *Parallax*. But then, Chris came up with a parallax scrolling routine and got a few sprites moving around, and we thought 'that looks pretty', so we scrapped *Wizball* for a while. We're doing it now.

GP Fine. But what exactly is *Wizball*?

CY It's a game. A game involving sprites and chars . . . characters.

JH You control a wizard in a bouncing ball and a little cat spins around the ball like a . . . 'multiple' – er, 'catalite'. The wizard is actually bigger than the ball – when he steps out of it to mix colours he goes PSSHWWEEEUT! . . . The world starts out black and white and gets coloured in through the game by doing certain things which we're not going to reveal. It's a sort of 'paint-by-numbers' game.

GP Is it going to have a proper ending though, unlike certain other *Parallax* games I could mention . . .

CY The reason we left *Parallax* open was because of the option of *Parallax II*. You hyperspace to earth, but it's a multi-earthable hyperspace – we're into that. We could do an another bit, where on your way back to earth you investigate another alien planet . . . accidentally.

GP So you will do another *Parallax*?

CY It's on the board at the moment, but it will depend on how well *Parallax* was received. If people still remember it in a few months' time then I suppose so . . . I actually quite enjoyed writing *Parallax* – *(sarcastically)* I enjoyed creating it because it's the sort of game I would like to play.

GP What's it like working for Ocean?

CY Well without making it sound too much like boot-licking . . . they're actually a very good company with very good intentions. They're a company of businessmen more than games-playing people, and they know exactly what to do on a personal level. If they think you're going to do them good, they do you good, so it's easy to form a suitable relationship with them. They treat you as people – they don't look down to you as people might think.

There were a lot of rumours spreading about that Ocean weren't very good at paying royalties and so on. But we've never found that. They didn't seem too bothered whether *Parallax* was going to make it or not. They had confidence in the game – they felt it was the best they had and they convinced *us* of that. Their belief in the game was paramount to the fact that it was going to sell well, or not. That was good.

GP Are there any programmers you admire?

CY Mel Croucher – he's definitely an innovation in the industry. He doesn't give a damn about what he does as long he's entertained by his own product – I feel. I think people find his stuff more entertaining because he's actually managed to put some of his own personality into it, instead of the usual, boring, second-rate arcade games which most people try to rip-off from the machines and never succeed. The Commodore hasn't got the memory, and most of the games are boring anyway.

GP Does it mean anything to get a good review?

CY Getting a good review is absolutely everything. It's the only real feedback you get – the company we're doing a game for are going to say it's good anyway. Apparently we got loads of letters about *Parallax* sent to Ocean, but they didn't pass them on . . .

JH Did we really?

CY Yeah. We get a few people writing to us saying whether they like our games or dislike them, but I think it's better that we don't read them. It would probably put us off. That's why a review is the only way of judging how well we're doing.

JH Yeah. When you review a game, don't you find it's easier to slag it than write about its good points? . . . If a game is going to impress it's got to be a totally new concept – or an extremely innovative adaptation of an existing concept. It's far easier to produce new presentation than it is to come up with new concepts. But coming up with ideas has never been much of a problem for us at all – it's always been getting the ideas down that's a problem.

JH We've got loads of new concepts that we'd really like to sell, but we can't find an outlet for them. It's so hard to go about it – actually communicating with someone else is the problem, making them see things as you see them.

CY But it's getting to the stage where's there's not much point in coming up with new ideas – things have to be the same or they won't sell. A game's got to have a name to it, or it's got to be the same thing in a different package. A big name or tie-in helps regardless of the quality of the game.

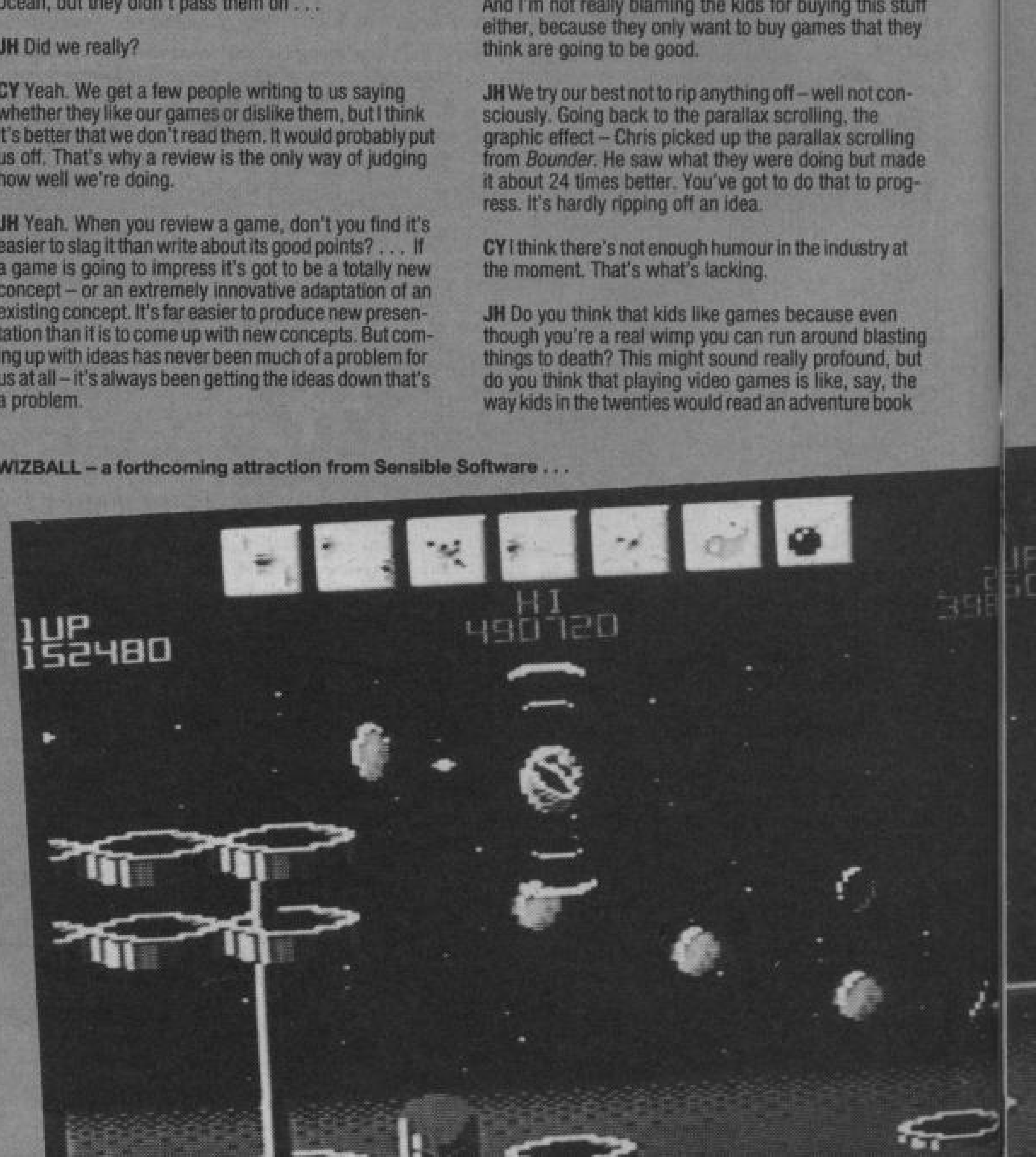
CY We shouldn't really blame the companies for wanting everything to look like everything else, or have a name, because it's not really their fault that those games sell. And I'm not really blaming the kids for buying this stuff either, because they only want to buy games that they think are going to be good.

JH We try our best not to rip anything off – well not consciously. Going back to the parallax scrolling, the graphic effect – Chris picked up the parallax scrolling from *Bounder*. He saw what they were doing but made it about 24 times better. You've got to do that to progress. It's hardly ripping off an idea.

CY I think there's not enough humour in the industry at the moment. That's what's lacking.

JH Do you think that kids like games because even though you're a real wimp you can run around blasting things to death? This might sound really profound, but do you think that playing video games is like, say, the way kids in the twenties would read an adventure book

WIZBALL – a forthcoming attraction from Sensible Software . . .





The domesticated duo get to grips with the washing up – Chris washing and John drying in perfect synchronization every 50th of a second . .

FOR A CHANGE!

and relate to the hero? Do you think it's the same thing?

GP I hadn't really thought about that before. I would say it depends on the quality of the comic strip – how well it's drawn, how well it's been executed. Do you get carried away with the action, and is there the sense of being there? I found that with *The Eidolon* – it was real, but in a dream sense. It was my dream and I was there.

JH Yeah. *Master of the Lamps* was the same. The music's amazing, and so are the visual effects . . . which draws you into it. It's beautiful. In *Psychedelia* you've got all these amazing visual effects, but there's no inertia. It is a good idea, because Jeff's tried something different, but I don't think it works.

GP What do think about the current trend of tie-ins?

JH It seems . . . well, it seems that no-one really cares about the kids anymore. Companies are just there to make money, to milk money from the kids. But if the kids still buy the games, whose fault is it? Is the kids' fault for actually buying the game because they recognize the name, or is the company's fault for bringing out the game because the kids want it? A game could get crap reviews, but the kids still buy it and it gets high chart ratings.

You sometimes have a go at companies for bringing out cash-in, tie-in titles, but the kids still buy them. It's the same with the pop industry. The market the companies are aiming at gets younger and younger and younger, and they're a more vulnerable market. It's the same in any industry – it's easier to influence young people. Kids either go to their parents and moan at them until they buy what their kid wants, or, they go out and buy it themselves because they think it's trendy. A kid sees his favourite program on the telly, out comes the computer game, so he buys it. But it's not necessarily a good game.

CY There are so many TV tie-ins or arcade conversions that just won't work. A tie-in comes out, it sells – it's crap. Who cares? It makes money. The kids are happy because they bought it and everyone else has bought it. People vote for it in the ZZAP! charts, so after they bought the game they must have still liked it, whether you think it's rubbish or not.

JH It's like music. Kids get into Heavy Metal. They're not into Heavy Metal because they like Heavy Metal – it's because their mates are into it. It's the same with software.

GP But would you ever program a poor TV, film or arcade game tie-in just for the money?

CY Yes – if people want to pay for it then we wouldn't disagree with them.

JH True – but at the same time we'd try to do our best to make it good. If we think something's awful we won't produce it. We wrote *Galaxibirds* because it *was* awful – it was a laugh. And it was cheap.

GP But some people didn't see the joke, even though it was cheap.

CY I feel that magazine reviewers are journalists more than games-players. When some people reviewed *Parallax* they didn't understand the humour. One magazine actually slagged it for the bad spelling mistake!

JH There are a lot of games that are just totally misunderstood. An example directly related to you is *Hercules*. You reviewed it and gave it a high mark. Other magazines gave it very low marks. It's not necessarily because either of you are wrong, it's because it looks like you found it funny and the other magazines didn't. It's all down to personal opinion and what appeals to you. This is why reviewers who can relate more to the people who buy the products are a lot better than some stuffy old journalist who's 30 years old and spent the past few years working with some small local newspaper.

CY It's like the music industry when a group becomes trendy, like Ah-Ha or Wham – or the Jam before that. People didn't listen to the singles before they went out and bought them. They bought them because the group was 'in'. It's the same with TV or film tie-ins. If a kid likes the TV title or the film title, and likes the adverts, he thinks it's going to be good. And most kids won't have read any reviews beforehand, so they won't know what they're going to buy. But it makes no difference. People go for the titles they recognize.

GP That's a bad thing?

CY It depends if the kids are happy with the games. But I think they would be happier if more quality software was produced and less dross.

GP What do you think of software today?

CY There's this thing in the programming world where everything's got to be technically correct – everything's got to be done every 50th of a second, and it's got be perfectly smooth and so on. Programmers seem to be forgetting about the actual game. *Trapdoor* is the most brilliant game I've played for ages. It isn't particularly well presented, but it's such an interesting, mentally stimulating game.

JH People aren't bothering to think up new concepts for games. With *Parallax* we tried to think up new concepts, but we had to keep the presentation tight – slick graphics, smooth scrolling and so on – and we couldn't put in any of the extra ideas because we ran out of memory. All for the sake of effect. That's not to say *Parallax* is a bad game – we think it's good as it is – but it's sort of . . . incomplete.

CY We could have left out all the gimmicks and put in more game-play, but it wouldn't have sold as well. Software should be entertaining, not just special graphics or music or even the game. We should be producing a complete package – not just a game. Kids pay for entertainment. They want to laugh at a game or laugh with it or enjoy playing it.

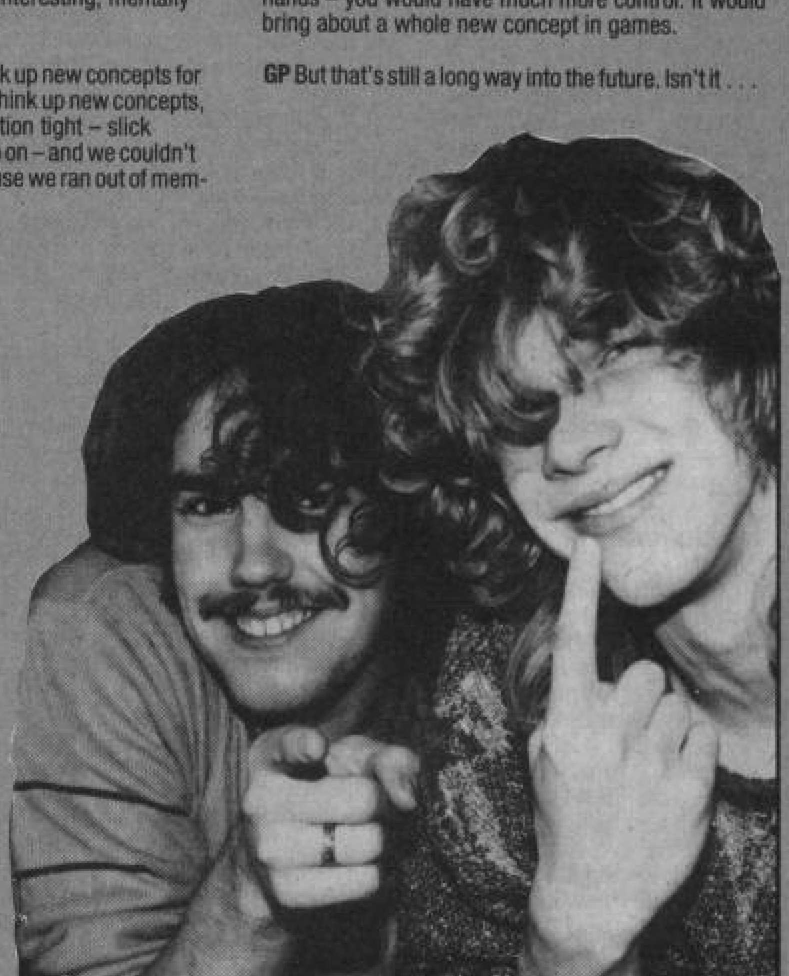
JH In the arcades . . . people are sticking to the old arcade concepts and simply glorifying the presentation, without bothering with new ideas. With *Wizball* we're trying to present new concepts in a familiar way. But whether it succeeds . . . We wanted to do *Wizball* with a company who could – I know this is hypocritical – but a company that could give it a bit of hype. So they could actually hype what we feel is a decent game. Otherwise it'd just get missed.

CY You've got to get inside to influence. You can't influence from the outside, by being anarchic, say. It won't work. It's like politics – if someone wants to change politics they've got to get into one of the major parties before they can actually start influencing.

JH Good presentation is becoming more important than a good game. *World Cup Carnival* was a good package – I mean, if you were into football it was interesting memorabilia. There again, if we'd bought *World Cup Carnival* we'd have been disappointed with it because we already had Artic's soccer in a package with four other games. The biggest problem with coming up with new concepts though, is hardware limitations. People are running out of ideas because they've only got a joystick and a keyboard – and there's only so much you can do with a joystick and a keyboard.

Take football games – they're all crap. Even the best football games. You're limited by the number of hands you've got and it can get incredibly frustrating – like when the computer selects which player you're controlling, it gets really frustrating. This is a good example of how the hardware limits the software. If you could wire up . . . maybe this will happen in the future . . . but if you could wire up little pads and things to detect nervous twitches from the brain or whatever – or from your hands – you would have much more control. It would bring about a whole new concept in games.

GP But that's still a long way into the future. Isn't it . . .



Ooh look, Chris – it's one of them camera things!
I dunno, John –

Nah, definitely a camera – there's no picture yet .

Julian Rignall



ZZAP! TIPS

Welcome to Porky Tiporamavision **– le** G-R-A-N-D **tips section pour votre enjoyment (*n'est pas*?). Just look at le menu: for hors-d'oeuvre there's a generous helping of general tips. The main course includes a POKEs special, and for le dessert there are some delightful maps. Feast votre proverbial yeux, mon amis – and forget the diet . . .**

STRIKE FORCE COBRA (Piranha)

If you're having problems negotiating the evil person's rather well defended fortress, then ne'er ye fear – help is at hand. If you start a new game and adhere to the following instructions, you can negotiate level one with ease.

Make sure you remember the starting location for each of the soldiers: ONE starts at O4 (the door here is locked at the moment), TWO at O8, THREE at A6 and FOUR at E0, standing by a window with a patrolling robot inside.

The aim on this floor is to get all four men inside the building (alive) and in suitable positions to assault the floor below. There's also an optional solution: to take THREE and FOUR down the lift at D4 and then with ONE and TWO use both lifts at M7 and N1.

First, select THREE and dive through the window at B2, twisting right on entry to avoid the electrified blocks. Move around (avoiding the terrorist on the scooter) to a position where the orb can be shot. Jump on the block next to the lift control block to activate the lift at N1 (this will be used later by other team members) and proceed through the door to D2. When the door is *almost* open, dive across the gun, through the door, avoid the robot and move down to the other lifting door. The door opens, so step to one side – just standing on the pressure pad. (DO NOT enter this room). Now change to FOUR.

Throw two EFGs through the window to slow down the robot. Dive in and dive again to clear the robot and get through the door. Continue past the patrol and stand near the two towers of blocks. Change back to THREE.

Follow FOUR to the towers. Standing on FOUR's shoulders, dive over and turn right. Enter the door at F5 – avoiding the fireballs, and dive over the laser beams. Dive through the window and immediately crouch. Shoot the flying saucer then activate the door control. This activates the door at B8 (thus allowing FOUR to back-track and gain entry later).

Dive through the window at G7 and turn around immediately to avoid landing on the laser beams. Proceed through to G4 (avoiding the robot at G5). Enter the door at G3 by carefully timing a dive across the sliding hazard. First aid is available in the small room at G0. The hostage at G2 will now give you part of the combination and also (by jumping on his shoulders) help you to get back to G3. Avoid (or shoot) the saucer at E5, and proceed to the lift at D4. Now change back to FOUR . . .

Back-track to E0 and then left to B0 (crouch). By the way, extra time is gained by destroying the organic computer at D1 (you need to open the door using the lever at A0). Proceed to A6, enter window to A7 and the door at B8 opens. Take care past the two patrols here.

First aid is available at D8 (although you may wish to leave this until after you have rescued the hostage) in the front right corner of D8. If you require first aid, position your man in the corner and press the jump button. THREE can be positioned at D7 to see the arrangement.

Next, enter the door to your left at C6 and continue through to B5. Shooting the robot slows it down – but you risk hitting the hostage. With care you can dive past, allowing the hostage to give you the second number.

Return to C6 (and back up for first aid if it hasn't already been used) and enter C5 by using the block in the corner and diving over the stacks – avoid the flying orb if it hasn't already been shot out. These two men are now in position.

Change to ONE and move around the perimeter of the building to the window at J0. EFG the saucer through the window then enter. Stand on the pad to open the two lifting doors.

Change to TWO and move left to K8. Dive in through the window (turning back to avoid the row of blocks), and crouch to avoid the gun. Time a series of dives across the two rows of blocks. Kick the door at K6 twice, to gain very careful access to K5. Walk left, dive and turn left. Take one step back and walk right, then dive and turn right. Take another step back and walk left, then dive. After that load of waltzing about, dive through (and turn) to J4 and crouch under both guns. Make your way to J6, avoiding the guns and robots as you go, and enter J7 and then J8. Dive across the moving hazard and activate the lift (for THREE and FOUR at D4)

Return to I5 the way you came (or you can chance your arm through H6 if you like!). Dive across lasers to I3 to H1, where first aid is available. Use the window at H1 after shooting the saucer through it. Do not use an EFG as this may destroy the first aid box! Note: once you are in the room DO NOT step on the pressure pad. The door at K3 is now open. You may consider swapping ONE and TWO over at this point, if TWO is particularly run down.

Enter to K3 and follow scooter in a clockwise square, then enter M3 shooting. Attempt to stop the scooter and gain access to the door control lever. This unlocks both doors O4 and M7.

When you've done that enter N2, turn and walk left. After a bullet passes, walk out into the corner and jump to avoid the next bullet (face forward in the air). Dive over the next bullet, take two or three steps forward, dive, turn right and dive. If you're still in one piece stand by the lift and change to ONE. Back out through the window to J0. Note: extra time is given if the organic computer at L2 is destroyed.

Proceed round to the door at 04 and into N4, around the corridor to L6 (there's first aid at L7). Kick the door at M6, enter and throw two or three EFGs to slow down the robot long enough to allow you to avoid it and rescue hostage. Repeat the last EFG procedure to slow down the robot again, then enter the lift at M7 to complete the first level.

IRIDIS ALPHA (Llamasoft/Hewsons)

If you're still having hassle with this classic Minter shoot 'em up, have a read of these well-zarjaz tips from John Crawley **of Orpington, Kent.**

WAVE ONE
Try not to crash into anything. Shoot everything 'til you turn white then land on the core. There should be about six aliens left so take off and shoot the rest – but make sure that you land on the core before the next wave appears.

WAVE TWO
You should now be on the core, so keep your finger on the fire button until there are about five hostiles left – the core should be almost full. Leave the core without crashing and shoot the remaining aliens – speeding up gradually.

WAVE THREE
These aliens are pretty damn nasty, but you should have quite a bit of energy left over from the last wave. The aliens appear as little white dots (they're Phreds from *Stargate* actually – JR), and are harmless until you shoot or crash into one. The best way of avoiding them is to zoom along to the left, turning and firing as you go. The faces that emerge from the Phreds are left behind and eventually disappear. Keep an eye on the energy situation – if it gets a bit high, crash into an alien and let it drop a little before whizzing off again.

As soon as the wave finishes, a progress chart is displayed before you are returned to the game. As soon as the action re-starts, beware – there are usually some faces from the last level, so make sure you keep out of their way until they disappear. When they disappear, keep shooting and dumping energy until you enter the bonus game.

If you do manage to get to the first bonus level, go straight to the left and speed up. The other bonus levels are increasingly complicated, so take them slowly and work them out for yourself.

That's a rough breakdown of the first few waves. Naturally things get harder from here on, so here are some general tips to help you along . . .

Try not to transfer to another planet – take one planet at a time, otherwise you can get lost. If you have to use the warp gate, make sure that both pointers are on the same planet.

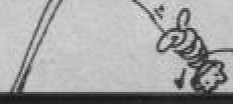
Entropy is the biggest pain of all. When the screen starts flashing, transfer to the other side of the planet via the rings left behind by shot aliens. The faces don't leave rings, so use the warp gates. On higher waves some rings don't work, but if they're shot, a camel (or something) emerges which can be used instead.

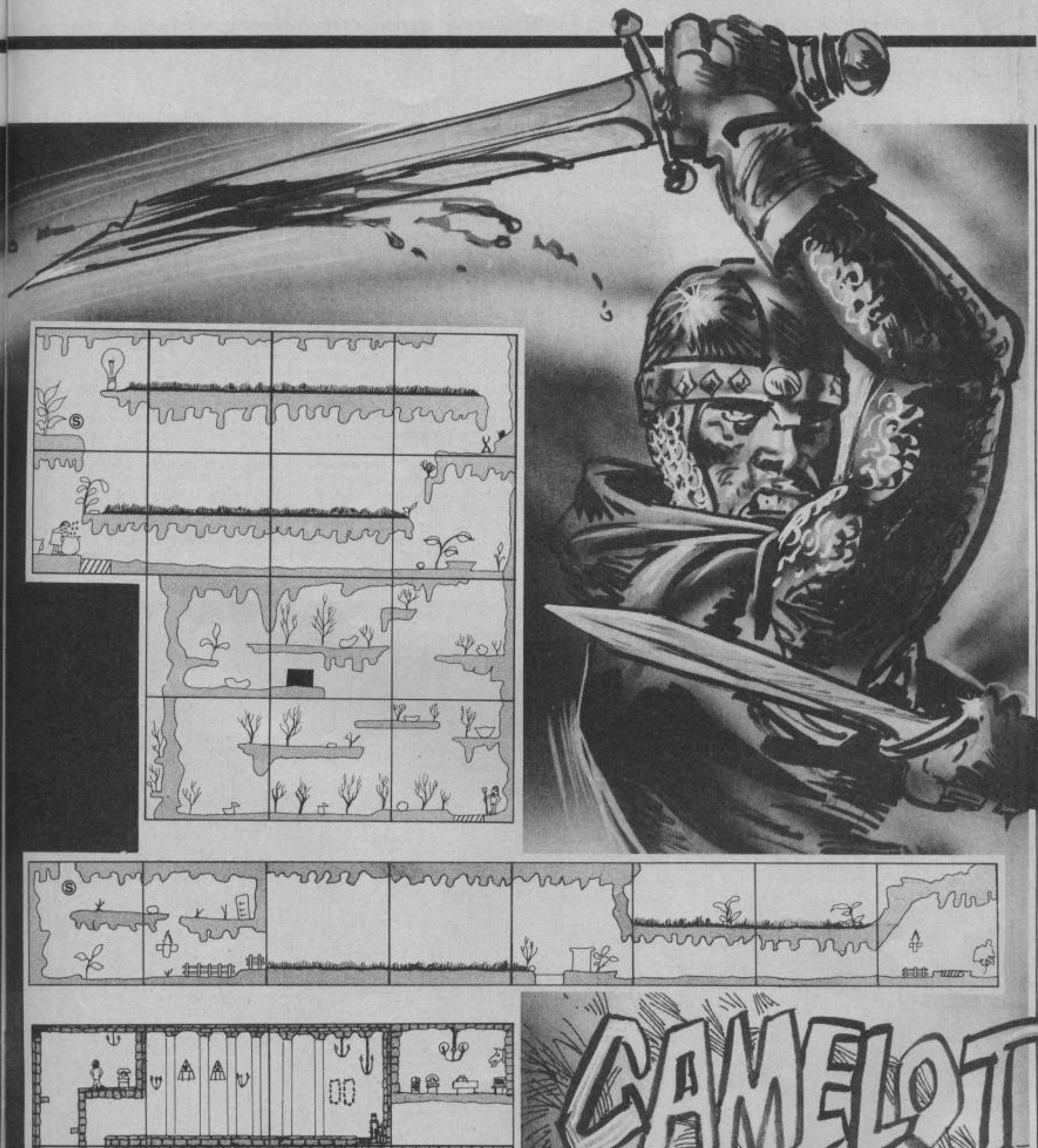
GOONIES (US Gold)

If you're playing on the first level, push F7 and F5 at the same time, then let go of F5 and let go F7 to go up (and sometimes down) a level. If you keep doing this you can finally become an Honorary Goonie. Thank you Mark Dorset **who comes from somewhere in Australia.**

TRAILBLAZER (Gremlin Graphics)

Nathan 'Golumn' Bunting **of no fixed abode, recommends that you press SHIFT/LOCK or ZXC at the same time. Really? So do I . . .**




CAMELOT WARRIORS
THE MAP
COMPILED BY MCG
S
START

MASTER OF MAGIC (MAD)

If you're still stuck with this arcade adventure, take heed of the advice supplied by Adam 'Deathblade' Steiner **of London N6 – you should be able to traverse the deadly dungeons and collect the amulet with relative ease.**

Starting in the cavern next to the pool, go SW to the pool room and kill the bat. Go to the corridor to the north of the pool and travel east. Turn the corner and continue east, passing the corridor going north. If these directions are followed you should come to a fork.

Go south into the cavern and exit from the NE corner. Before the Orc can attack, zap it with a magic missile then collect the mace left behind.

Return to the pool room and leaver via the east exit. Take the first passage to the north, enter the cavern then exit NW. Now for some action – kill the bat to uncover three stairways. Use the bottom set of stairs, kill the mace-wielding Orc then pick up the suit of armour which mysteriously appears.

Return to the cavern you got the mace from. Go south to the passageway and enter the room with the door. Avoiding the snake, go to the room containing a healing potion – collect it and return to the room with the door. Go east and continue along the passageway. When you reach the cavern, go north and kill the bat before going up the stairs. Open all doors, cross the hall to the north and open the other door. Go through this door to find a ring – wear it.

When you've got the ring leave the chamber and go west until you reach two sets of stairs and a passage. Enter the lower set of stairs and kill the spider. A backpack can be found in this passage, and taking it allows you to carry more objects (Note: your inventory cannot see any objects in the backpack until you take them out).

Return to the stairs and climb the second set to enter the third level – the Labarinthine chamber. Kill three skeletons, an Orc and a pack of Hell-hounds – fireball them to kill the Hell-hounds and Orc and wound the skeletons.

If you manage to do this you should find a shield, a mace, a dagger, a ring and a helmet. Take them. The mace is pretty useless, but the dagger is made of wood. Rush back to where you got the armour, and continue along the passage until you reach the vampire. Kill it with the wooden dagger (stake) and get the Dagger of Death. The wooden dagger can now be discarded as the Dagger of Death is the only weapon that can be used effectively against the Minotaur that guards the amulet.

Rush back to the Labarinthine level, find and climb the stairs at the bottom right hand corner to reach the final level. Go along the hall until you see two doors. Take the door to the south and continue due south, without deviating down any of the side passages. When you reach a corner, turn it and keep going until you reach a room – exit by the north passage. At the fork, go west and enter a room. Kill the skeleton with your mace and get the healing potion.

Return to the main hall of this floor. Open the door to the north and enter. Go west again and follow the passageway, not taking any side passages, until you reach a spider which you should kill with your mace. Enter the room then exit through the opposite door. Go south until you face a door. Prepare the Dagger of Death, then rush in and attack the Minotaur before he attacks you. Note: you have to be pretty healthy to do this. Up and east there is an amulet which you should pick up. Go west and enter the teleport to find yourself on the third level. Return to the pool and drop the amulet. Hear the victory bop and feel cool. Dance around the room. Trip over and impale yourself on a small slug . . .

LABYRINTH

(Activision)

Yes, just what you always wanted – the complete solution to Lucasfilm's latest but far from greatest . . . Thanks to Jason Hill **from Stoke-on-Trent,** Gavin Lattimore **from Hornchurch, Essex,** Niloy Acharyya **from Hull and** Roy Tharle **from Littlehampton, West Sussex.**

ADVENTURE SECTION

GO Home
TAKE Camcorder
GO Outside
GO North
GIVE Nickel
GO West
GO Theatre
GIVE Dollar
GO Theatre
GO North
LOOK
GIVE Dollar
TAKE
COMPLAIN
COMPLAIN
TAKE
TAKE
GIVE Nickel
GO South
GO South
GIVE Popcorn
COMPLAIN

THE LABYRINTH
Press the fire button to skip the introductory sequence and enter the Labyrinth – now the real arcade adventure can begin. Walk right until you come to a ROCK – TAKE it. Also, TAKE LOG (when you find it). Now, walk into a word door to be transported to . . .

THE BRICK HALLWAY
TAKE CRYSTAL BALL (when you find it) and OPEN all doors. USE VENDING MACHINE towards the far left end of the corridor by INSERTing QUARTER – TAKE the BOTTLE that is dispensed. Also TAKE the PEACH (when you find it). Now find the door which leads deeper into the Labyrinth.

ALPH AND RALPH
ASK ALPH. OPEN both doors, then walk through the exit with the sign 'TO THE CASTLE'.

THE WALL OF HANDS
Simply CONGRATULATE WALL to escape.

THE STONE CORRIDOR
TAKE PEACH and TAKE ROCK then go down the hallway to the far left. TAKE SHEARS and TAKE CRYSTAL BALL (when you find them). Walk to the armoured Goblin and GIVE PEACH. TAKE HELMET then go down the hallway to the left of the sleeping Goblin guard to enter . . .

THE HEDGE MAZE
TAKE CRYSTAL BALL and TAKE BRACELET. USE SHEARS to move further into the maze. You will eventually reach . . .

THE WISE MAN'S GARDEN
ASK WISE MAN – he will recite a riddle. GIVE DOLLAR, TAKE CHANGE and TAKE RULE BOOK. Now solve the riddle to find the exit . . .

THE SECOND HEDGE MAZE
USE SHEARS to go deeper into the Labyrinth.

THE FOREST
CALL FIREY. Try to find your way out of the maze to enter . . .

THE BOG OF ETERNAL STENCH
ASK SIR DIDYMUS and keep ASKing until he tells you to free Ludo. Walk to the far left to enter . . .

THE PERSECUTION OF LUDO
All you have to do here is free Ludo. However, before you can do this, you have to get the two Goblins guards to fall through the trapdoors. So, walk over a trapdoor three times until it turns red – now, the next step will trigger it. When both Goblins are out of the way, walk over to Ludo and USE SHEARS to cut him down.

THE SECOND HEDGE MAZE
CALL LUDO, CALL ROCKS and USE CAMCORDER.

THE FOREST CALL FIREY and GIVE CAMCORDER. Now TAKE HEAD, TAKE ARM and TAKE LEG. THROW HEAD whenever you get to an archway in the trees – go down the hallway if the head sees something beside the trees.

At this point, you should make your way to the Bog and USE LEG to get across, or you can pass through either of the following rooms . . .

THE DOOR KNOCKERS Go to the left door and TAKE KEY. Now walk over to the right door. HIT KNOCKER, and while the mouth is open INSERT BRACELET. OPEN DOOR and TAKE BRACELET.

THE STONE FACES
INSULT WALL to get hints. Try to find your way out and get back to . . .

THE BOG OF ETERNAL STENCH
USE LEG to negotiate the bog. CALL LUDO if the bridge is down. CALL ROCKS four times before entering . . .

THE GOBLIN VILLAGE
USE HELMET and walk through the village to the second house from the right. Go through the door to appear . . .

UNDERGROUND
DROP LOG when Slasher appears, then TAKE PLANK (it used to be the log).

THE CASTLE EXTERIOR
DROP HELMET and CALL ROCKS. Now THROW ROCKS at the marching Goblins. Note: the middle Goblin has to be hit either with the helmet or five times with the rocks (you can call for more rocks if you run out). When all the Goblins have gone, walk towards the door – but don't get too close. USE ARM, then enter . . .

THE SECRET CORRIDOR
Find the missing black key in the piano keyboard walls, then INSERT PLANK. Now OPEN DOOR.

THE UPSIDE-DOWN ROOM
Move onto the same level as JARETH and THROW CRYSTAL BALL. When you hit him you are taken to . . .

END GAME
Be careful not to slide off the disk. To win the game, simply select one of the nonsense messages and hit RETURN.

By the way – if you are running low on time, remember this little bug . . . When you reach the Wise Man's Garden, walk up to him and TAKE RULE BOOK. READ RULE BOOK repeatedly to end up with over a fifty hour time limit!


WITCH
START
WIZARD
REEVE
HERBALIST
TITHE
KNIGHT
BISHOP
TITHE
REEVE
PRINCESS
QUEEN
TITHE
HERBALIST
BISHOP
PEASANT
KNIGHT
HERMIT
KEY
MAGIC HOUSE
SPELL HOUSE
+ LOCATION
INFORMATION
TRADE
SUPPLIES
TITHE HOUSE
QUEEN
TUNNELS
FIRES
WEAPON THIEVES
ROAMING BLOBS
COMPILED BY A.H. ROBSON.
FIRELORD

POKES

PAPERBOY (Elite)

Demolish high scores and annoy the Scorelord, courtesy of these Jim Blackler POKEs.

Simply get out your *Paperboy* cassette, stick it into the C2N and rewind it, then type in the following listing . . .

```
PAPERBOY LISTING
10 READ Z:POKE 20100,A+Z:A=A+1:IF Z THEN 10
20 DATA 169, 4, 141, 49, 8, 185, 149, 78, 153, 52, 4,
136, 208, 247, 76, 13, 8, 169, 96
30 DATA 141, 166, 41
40 DATA 141, 107, 40
50 DATA 76, 52, 8, 0
```

Now type RUN (RETURN), followed by LOAD (RETURN) to load the first part. When the computer resets, type POKE 1012,78:RUN (RETURN) to load and run the game . . . Line 30 gives infinite lives, while line 40 provides an unlimited supply of papers. Nice, eh?

TRAPDOOR (Piranha)

If your Berk is having trouble getting the food ready on time, try out this little POKE . . . Load the game as normal, reset the computer and type POKE 14914,96 (RETURN). SYS 14336 (RETURN) to start the game with unlimited time.

LIGHT FORCE (FTL)

If you need unlimited lives for this shoot 'em up *par excellence*, simply load the program, reset the computer and type POKE 11547,5 (RETURN). SYS 6713 (RETURN) starts the game . . . Couldn't be easier! Thanks to Rambo of the A-Team Crackers, South Humberside.

CAMELOT WARRIORS (Ariolasoft)

If you use the following Rambo POKEs in conjunction with the map you shouldn't have any problems solving this rather flaccid arcade adventure. Load the program, reset the 64 and type:

POKE 23730,234
POKE 23731,234
POKE 23732,234

Now SYS 16384 to start the game with unlimited lives.

SHADOWFIRE (Beyond)

If you've never solved this ageing (but pretty damn neat) icon-driven arcade adventure, get it out (the cassette that is) and load it. Now reset the 64. Why? So you can enter this Jim Blackler POKE . . . Type POKE 25188,173 (RETURN) then SYS 16384 (RETURN) to start the program with unlimited time. Good, eh?

EREBUS (Virgin)

Grab your *Erebus* cassette and load it. Now reset the computer and enter the following . . .

POKE 2379,106
POKE 2380,9
Disables sprite to background collision detection
POKE 2391,106
POKE 2392,9
Disables sprite to sprite collision detection.

Now you can SYS 12117 (RETURN) to restart the game. I'm not sure whether these POKEs work though – some turkey has lost our reset switch. Nevertheless, thanks to Spy and Spike of Delft in da Netherlands.

SPACE HARRIER (Elite)

Here we have a whole host of POKEs which allow you to do all sorts of things to this game – but don't try them all at once, as the program will probably crash!

Insert a rewound *Space Harrier* cassette into the tape deck, type LOAD (RETURN) and 'press play on tape'. When the READY prompt appears type POKE 1011,248:POKE 1012,252:RUN (RETURN). The second part of the game will now load. When the READY prompt appears again type in . . .

POKE 816,167:POKE 817,2:POKE 2096,248:POKE 2097,252:SYS 2061
And the next part will load. When the computer resets, enter any of the following POKEs . . .

POKE 5834,96
Infinite time
POKE 6010,173
Infinite lives
POKE 2214,0-255
Increases or decreases time
POKE 6543,0
Disables the collision detection between you and the alien missiles
POKE 6059,0
Allows you to pass through indestructible objects
POKE 7236,0:POKE 7231,0
Gives auto-fire during the game
POKE 6666,234
Gives a continuous 'smart bomb' effect which destroys all destructible objects that come onto the screen
POKE 12707,1-15
Changes the colour of the trees on the first level
POKE 14631,127
Slows down the proceedings
POKE 2456,69
Speeds up the game slightly

If you want to play a 'full screen' version of the game and have unlimited lives at the same time, type in . . .

POKE 14437,32
POKE 14438,1
POKE 14439,8
POKE 14578,32
POKE 14579,1
POKE 14580,8
POKE 2049,141
POKE 2050,33
POKE 2051,208
POKE 2052,141
POKE 2053,32
POKE 2054,208
POKE 2055,169
POKE 2056,10
POKE 2057,141
POKE 2058,186
POKE 2059,78
POKE 2060,96

Once you have entered your chosen POKEs, SYS 2128 to start the game. Another listing you can try is this hassle-free Tim and Ian Fraser offering. Type in the following program, put a rewound *Space Harrier* cassette into the datacorder, RUN the listing and depress the play button. When the READY prompt appears type SYS 320 (RETURN) to load and run the game with unlimited lives AND an abort feature (hit RESTORE) . . .

```
SPACE HARRIER LISTING
10 I=320
20 READ A:IF A=256 THEN END
30 POKE I,A:I=I+1:GOTO 20
40 DATA 169, 77, 141, 243, 3, 169, 1, 141
50 DATA 244, 3, 76, 13, 8, 169, 100, 141
60 DATA 48, 8, 169, 1, 141, 49, 8, 169
70 DATA 167, 141, 48, 3, 169, 2, 141, 49
80 DATA 3, 76, 13, 8, 169, 173, 141, 122
90 DATA 23, 169, 80, 141, 46, 56, 169, 8
100 DATA 141, 51, 56, 76, 80, 8, 224, 256
```

Many thanks to: Munky from Forfar, Angus; Jason Page, Witham, Essex; Kelvin Clegg, Hayle, Cornwall; Andrew Grifo, Walkden, Manchester; Russell Flaherty, Liverpool L14; Simon Hadlington, Oxted, Surrey; Jim Blackler, Lancaster, and Dave Saunders and Ashley Routledge from Eastbourne, Sussex for this amazing series of POKEs.

TERRA COGNITA (Code Masters)

Fed up of being hassled by aliens? I thought so. Right – load the program, reset the computer and type POKE 26703,255 (RETURN), followed by SYS 24576 (RETURN) to make the little beggars pack their bags and leave! Now you can whizz about to your heart's content and only worry about crashing into landscape features. Once again, thanks go to Rambo of the A-Team Crackers.

THE SENTINEL (Firebird)

Eeeee . . . That Lancashire lad, Jim Blackler, is back again – this time with some infinite energy for this amazing concept. Load *The Sentinel*, reset the computer and enter these POKEs . . .

POKE 6679,173
POKE 8512,10
SYS 16128 (RETURN) restarts the game.

GAUNTLET (US Gold)

Would you like some help with this rather smart arcade conversion? You would! Oh bliss . . . Right, load the program as normal. When you're prompted to rewind to the beginning of side two, reset the 64 and enter . . .

POKE 41021,189
POKE 44373,185
POKE 44381,185
POKE 47658,189
POKE 47666,189
POKE 48514,189
POKE 48524,189
POKE 50357,189
POKE 50367,189
POKE 50814,189
POKE 50824,189
. . . for unlimited health

POKE 48621,96
Stops the nasties attacking you
POKE 49009,96
Stops the nasties killing you
SYS 32768 **to start the game with your selected changes. Cheers to** Jim Blackler **from Lancaster and** Andy Grifo, **Manchester for those POKEs.**

PAC MAN (Datasoft/US Gold)

Having trouble achieving high-scores on this ancient relic? Well never fear, for help is at hand in the form of some POKEs from Haamsoft. **Load the program and reset the machine so you can enter the following . . .**

POKE 15907,32
POKE 15908,32
POKE 15909,32
Done that? Good. SYS 2061 **to start the game. A new opening will have appeared to the right of the ghost box – enter it and demolish your high-score.**

THE LAST V8 (Mastertronic)

(NB: 128 Version ONLY)
No complaints about this 128-only POKE, if you please. Insert the disk into the drive and LOAD"0:*",8,1. Wait 'til the drive stops whirring then enter the following as a line number . . .
210 SLOW:BANK 0:POKE 61079,96:SYS4864
Type RUN (RETURN) **to load the rest of the program with unlimited shields, time and fuel. Cheers to good old** Tim **and** Ian Fraser **of Ruislip, Middlesex.**

TERRA CRESTA (Imagine)

Here's a rather long, but extremely useful listing from Andrew Grifo **of Worsley, Manchester. It knocks out sprite to sprite collision, but still lets you shoot things! Simply (!) type in the listing, plonk the tape into the C2N and** RUN **the program. When the computer resets, type** SYS 49152 (RETURN). **Now all you have to do is 'press play on tape' and wait for the program to load.**

```
TERRA CRESTA LISTING
20 FOR A=49152 TO 49265:READ B:POKE
A,B:NEXT
30 PRINT CHR$(147) "PRESS A KEY TO RESET"
40 PRINT "WHEN RESET TYPE SYS 49152 (RE-
TURN) AND PRESS PLAY ON TAPE"
50 GET A$:IF A$="" THEN 50
60 SYS 64738
70 DATA 32, 44, 247, 169, 0, 141, 32, 208
80 DATA 32, 108, 245, 169, 24, 141, 2, 4
90 DATA 169, 192, 141, 3, 4, 76, 99, 3
100 DATA 169, 37, 141, 104, 0, 169, 192, 141
110 DATA 105, 0, 76, 43, 0, 169, 20, 141
120 DATA 104, 0, 169, 173, 141, 105, 0, 169
130 DATA 142, 133, 73, 169, 1, 133, 74, 162
140 DATA 0, 189, 71, 192, 157, 142, 1, 232
150 DATA 224, 43, 208, 245, 76, 20, 173, 169
160 DATA 169, 141, 22, 58, 169, 0, 141, 23
170 DATA 58, 169, 141, 141, 24, 58, 169, 40
180 DATA 141, 25, 58, 169, 2, 141, 26, 58
190 DATA 169, 76, 141, 141, 30, 169, 181, 141
200 DATA 142, 30, 169, 30, 141, 143, 30, 76
210 DATA 80, 0
```

BREAKTHRU (US Gold)

Here's a neat little 'look, no reset' listing which gives you an unlimited amount of cars to play with. Insert the cassette into the drive, type in and RUN **the listing, then press play on tape to load and run the program with an unlimited supply of armoured cars. Thanks to** Tim **and** Ian Fraser **of Ruislip, Middlesex.**

```
BREAKTHRU LISTING
10 I=49152
11 READ A:IF A=256 THEN SYS 49205
12 POKE I,A:I=I+1:GOTO 11
13 DATA 32, 83, 228, 169, 0, 32, 144, 255
14 DATA 169, 1, 170, 168, 32, 186, 255, 169
15 DATA 1, 162, 253, 160, 2, 32, 189, 255
16 DATA 169, 0, 32, 213, 255, 162, 7, 189
17 DATA 79, 192, 157, 44, 1, 202, 16, 247
18 DATA 169, 44, 141, 100, 5, 169, 1, 141
19 DATA 101, 5, 76, 0, 4, 32, 83, 228
20 DATA 169, 0, 32, 144, 255, 169, 1, 170
21 DATA 168, 32, 186, 255, 169, 0, 32, 189
22 DATA 255, 32, 213, 255, 76, 0, 192, 169
23 DATA 173, 141, 204, 25, 76, 0, 10, 256
```

SPEED KING (Mastertronic)

Here are some neat POKEs which disable the sprite to sprite collision, allowing you to whizz through the computer bikers without crashing. First of all POKE 43,3:LOAD (RETURN). **When** READY **appears type** POKE 43,1 (RETURN). **Now enter the following . . .**

20 IF F=3 THEN POKE 35863,234:POKE 35864,234:POKE 35865,234:SYS 34816
Type RUN (RETURN) **to load and run the game. Thanks to** Martin Pugh **who lives in Holywell, Clwyd.**

COBRA (Ocean)

How about a few extra lives for this tacky program? Yeah? OK, type in the following listing and RUN **it. When the computer resets type** SYS 49152 (RETURN) **and 'press play on tape'. Thanks to** Andrew Grifo **from Walkden, Manchester for the curing this particular disease.**

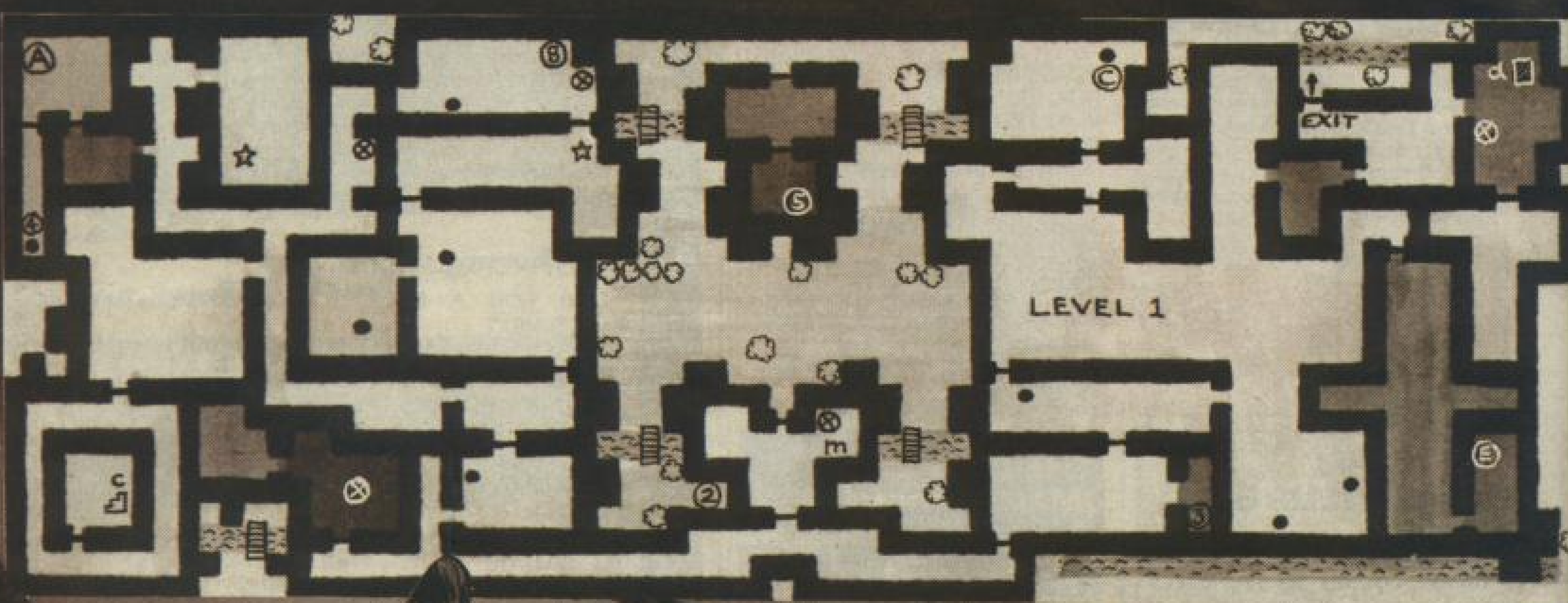
```
COBRA LISTING
20 FOR A=49152 TO 49213:READ B:POKE
A,B:NEXT
30 PRINT CHR$(147) "HOW MANY LIVES (3-255)";
40 INPUT LIVES:POKE 49200,LIVES
50 PRINT "PRESS ANY KEY TO RESET AND TYPE
SYS 49152 (RETURN)"
60 GET K$:IF K$="" THEN 60
70 SYS 64738
80 DATA 32, 44, 247, 169, 0, 141, 32, 208
90 DATA 32, 108, 245, 169, 24, 141, 2, 4
100 DATA 169, 192, 141, 3, 4, 76, 99, 3
110 DATA 169, 37, 141, 104, 0, 169, 192, 141
120 DATA 105, 0, 76, 43, 0, 169, 20, 141
130 DATA 104, 0, 169, 173, 141, 105, 0, 169
140 DATA 255, 133, 65, 169, 154, 133, 67, 169
150 DATA 8, 133, 68, 76, 20, 173
```

SCOOBY DOO (Elite)

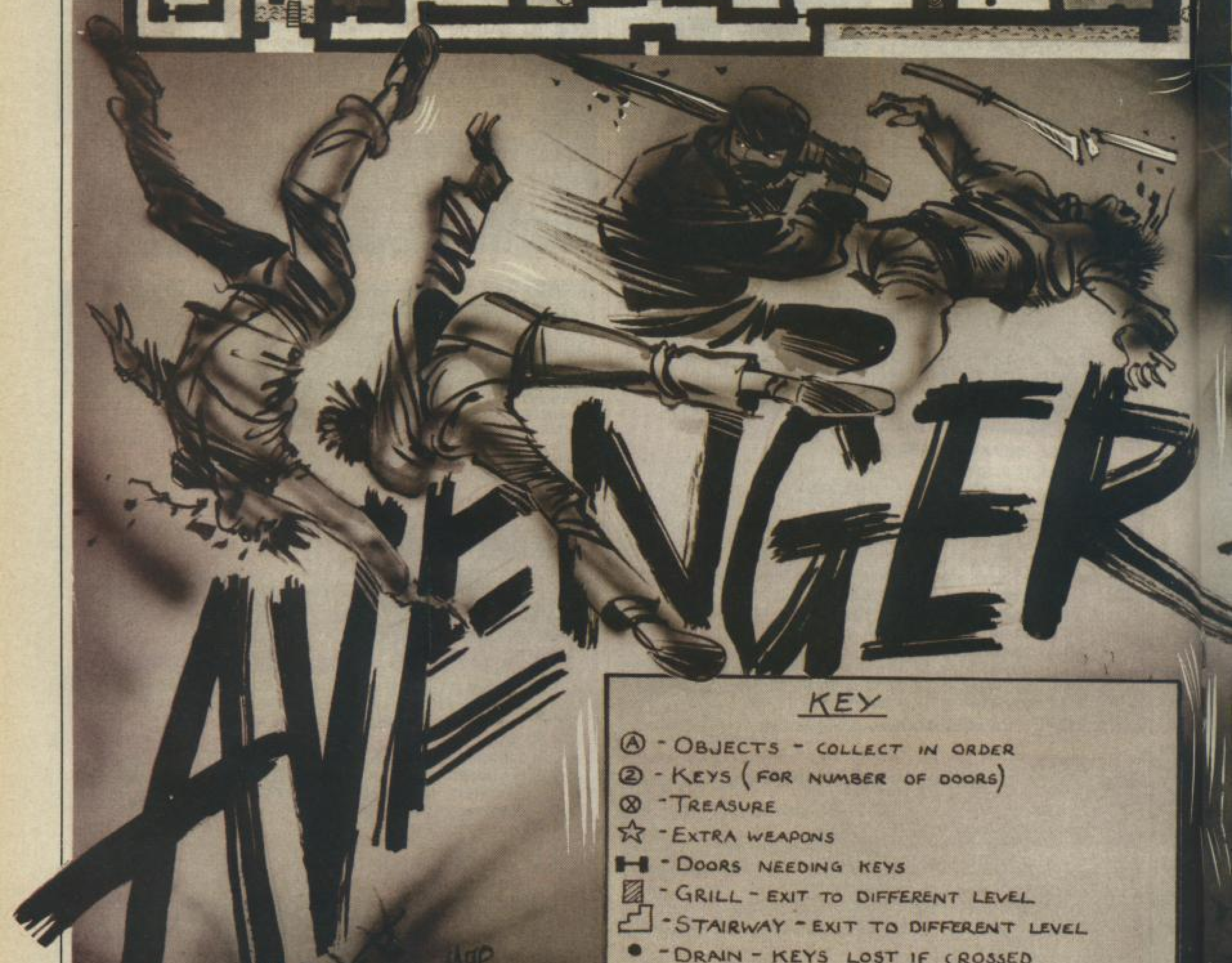
Overwhelmed by the marauding ghosts? Getting done over before you can rescue all your buddies? Well I've got news for you, matey . . . follow Andrew Grifo's **advice and you can become an invincible Scooby! Having stuffed your** *Scooby Doo* **cassette into the deck, type** LOAD (RETURN). **When the** READY **prompt appears, enter these POKEs . . .**

POKE 1010,76
POKE 1011,248
POKE 1012,252
Now type RUN (RETURN) **to load the second part. When the computer resets type . . .**

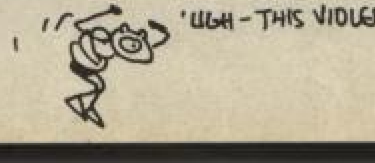
POKE 816,167
POKE 817,2
POKE 2095,76
POKE 2096,248
POKE 2097,252
. . . followed by SYS 2061 **to load the final part of the program. When the computer resets . . .**
POKE 7450,96
. . . and SYS 2560 (RETURN) **to start the game. The ghosts won't hurt poor Scooby – and he can still hit them!**



LEVEL 1
EXIT



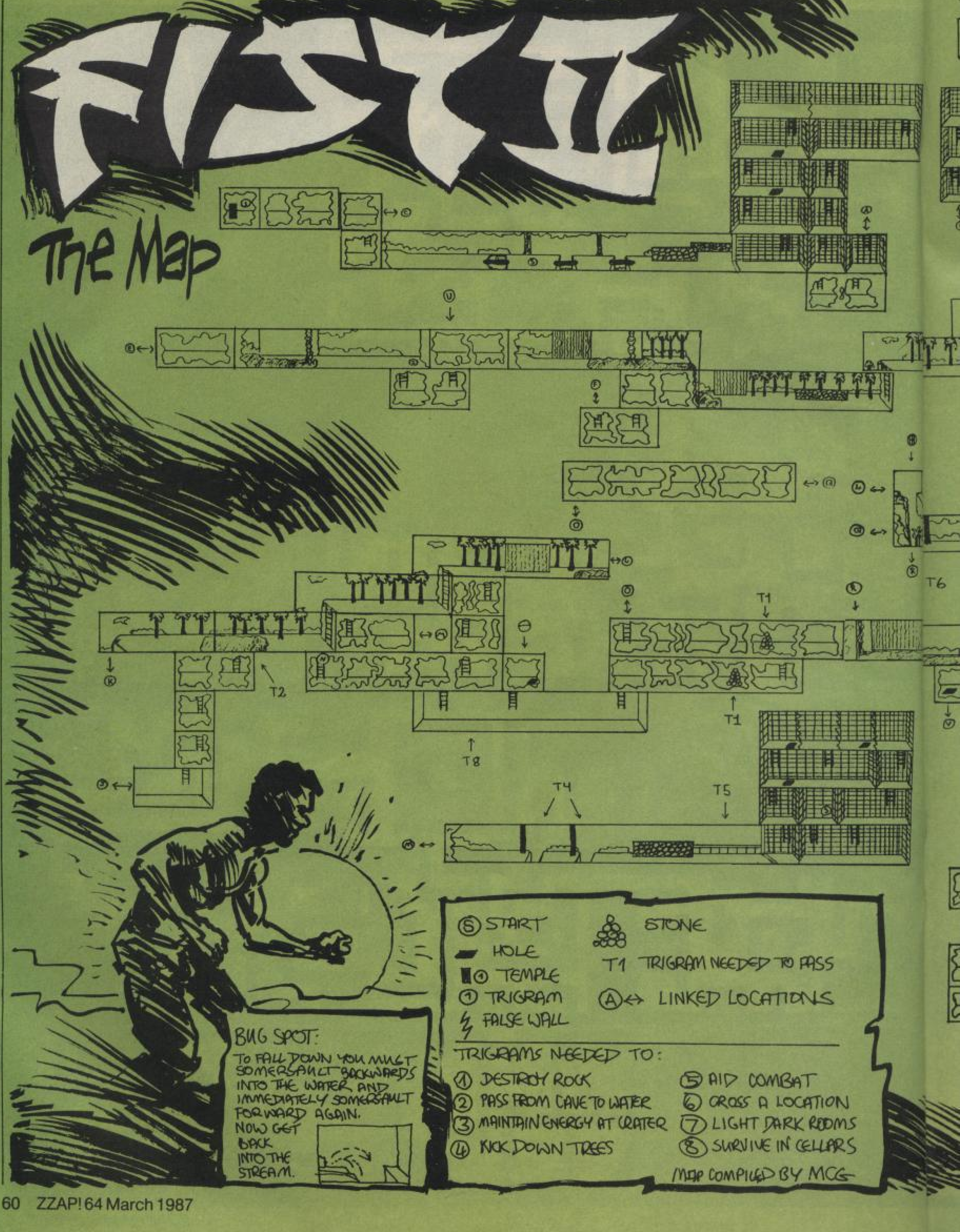
AVENGER
MAP COMPILED BY MCG
KEY
Ⓐ - OBJECTS - COLLECT IN ORDER
② - KEYS (FOR NUMBER OF DOORS)
⊗ - TREASURE
☆ - EXTRA WEAPONS
- DOORS NEEDING KEYS
- GRILL - EXIT TO DIFFERENT LEVEL
- STAIRWAY - EXIT TO DIFFERENT LEVEL
• - DRAIN - KEYS LOST IF CROSSED
EXITS FROM LEVELS LINKED TO DESTINATION BY SAME LETTER

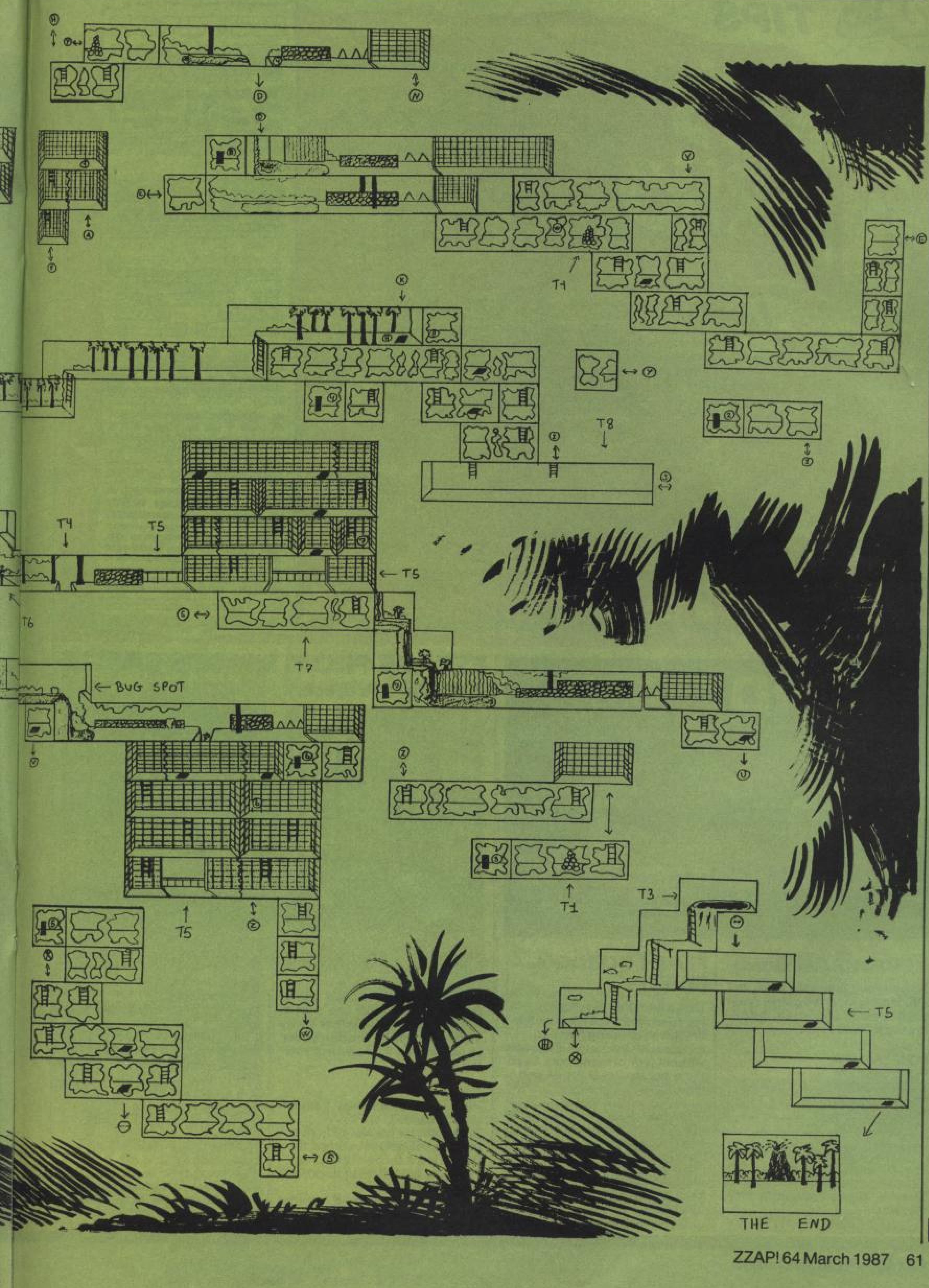

'UGH - THIS VIOLENCE...'

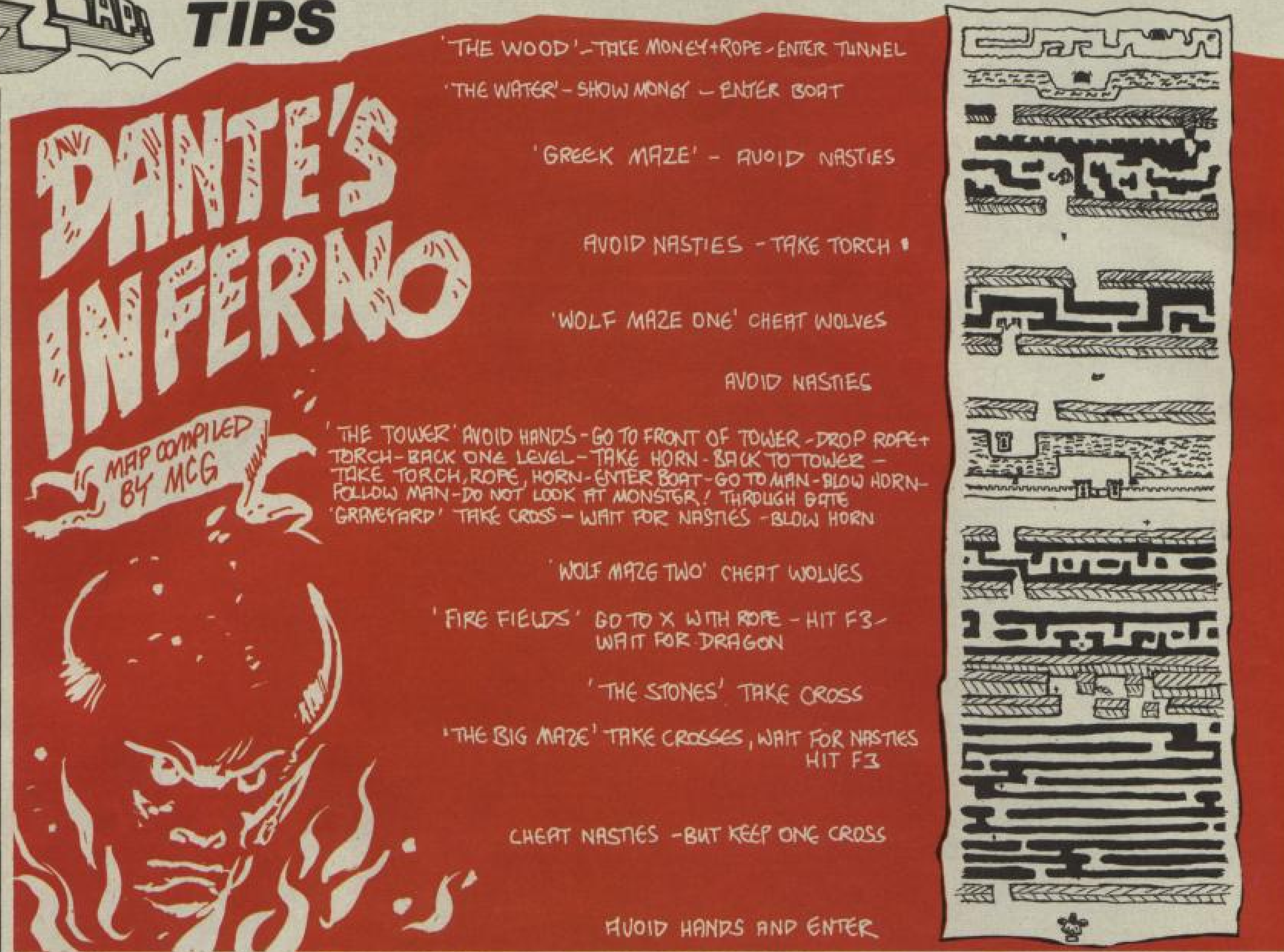


OBJECTS

	LEVEL
A - CONTAINER	1
B - ORB	1
C - LEVER	1
D - POISON BLOOD	4
E - ROPE	1
F - GRILL	2
G - MONK	3
H - HAND	6
I - CHARM	5
J - HORSESHOE	5
K - SCROLL	6


FIST II
The Map
T1
T2
T4
T5
T6
T8
START
HOLE
TEMPLE
TRIGRAM
FALSE WALL
STONE
T1 TRIGRAM NEEDED TO PASS
Ⓐ↔ LINKED LOCATIONS
TRIGRAMS NEEDED TO:
① DESTROY ROCK
② PASS FROM CAVE TO WATER
③ MAINTAIN ENERGY AT CRATER
④ KICK DOWN TREES
⑤ AID COMBAT
⑥ CROSS A LOCATION
⑦ LIGHT DARK ROOMS
⑧ SURVIVE IN CELLARS
MAP COMPILED BY MCG
BUG SPOT:
TO FALL DOWN YOU MUST SOMERSAULT BACKWARDS INTO THE WATER AND IMMEDIATELY SOMERSAULT FORWARD AGAIN.
NOW GET BACK INTO THE STREAM.


T4
T8
T4
T5
← T5
T6
T7
← BUG SPOT
T5
T1
T3 →
← T5
THE END



DRUID

(Firebird)

If you're still having problems with this *Gauntlet* clone, or just want a bit of fun, load the program and reset the computer. Now you can enter the following POKEs . . .

POKE 35731,12

Ghosts won't reduce your energy

POKE 35744,0

Automatic power refill

POKE 37940,0

Stops the invincibility counter dropping once it's been activated

POKE 39421,0

Stops the chaos counter dropping once it's been activated

POKE 35779,76
POKE 35780,215
POKE 35781,139

Allows you to walk on water
SYS 5120 **restarts the game. Thanks very much** Erik Boerboom **who lives at 6931DJ Westervoort, Holland.**

XEVIOUS (US Gold)

So you want unlimited lives, eh? OK, simply load the game, reset the computer and type in the following POKEs . . .

POKE 5663,234
POKE 5664,234
POKE 5665,234
POKE 5635,234
POKE 5636,234
POKE 5637,234

SYS 5000 (RETURN) **to restart the program. Thanks to** Mark Gladding **who hails from sunny Murray Bay, Auckland, New Zealand.**

FLASH GORDON (MAD)

These neat POKEs disable sprite to sprite collision on the first level, allowing Flash to mingle with the jungle denizens without fear of being hurt. Load the program, reset the 64 and type:

POKE 22603,234
POKE 22604,169
POKE 22605,0

Then SYS 12280 (RETURN) **to start the game. You can thank** Graham Rigby **for that MAD (groan) tip.**

ESCAPE FROM SINGE'S CASTLE

(Software Projects)



What kindness! Michael James Gibson **of Leicester has sent in the solution to the rather tricky Throne Room, so you don't need to go through the hassle of solving it yourself.**

Continually . . .
Push left to move away from the electric hand.
Push right to leap away from the electric charge that comes from the orb in the centre of the screen.
Press the fire button to dispose of another electric hand.
Push forward to avoid another electric charge, then left to avoid more electricity.
Pull back to avoid yet more electricity.
A disc of light will start to move around the orb in the centre of the screen – push forward at the right time to jump it. The disc gets faster and faster and has to be jumped eight times.
Push right to avoid the electric charge.
Another disc of light will appear, only this time it travels in the opposite direction to the first. It's up to you to time the eight jumps.
Push forward to jump into the throne – and you've done it!

SPELLBOUND

(MAD)

Yes, I do realise that tips for this game have already been printed – but there hasn't been a complete solution, so here it is . . . as supplied by Leighton Phillips **of Abertillery, Gwent. By the way, if you want an even bigger head-start you can always use the POKEs printed in issue 16.**

Drop the advert then pick up the teleport key and teleport. Keep walking right until you pass by Thor and reach the little ledge. Jump onto the ledge and walk left, past the flowers, until you come to a glowing bottle. Pick it up and teleport. Now pick up the teleport pad you're standing on, and walk left until you come to a red herring – pick it up.

Continue to walk left until you come to the advert (this is where you started the game) and drop the teleport pad. Carry on walking left until you reach the lift. Call the lift and enter when it arrives. Move the lift to the second floor and walk right until you come to Samsun. Note: sometimes Samsun is already in the lift. Take the Elf Horn from Samsun, go back to the lift and drop the red herring.

Now move the lift to the roof. Walk over to Lady Rosmar and pick up the bottle of liquid. Carry on walking right until you come to the wand of command – pick it up and teleport. You should now be standing next to Florin the Dwarf, so give him the bottle of liquid and command him to wake up. Take the teleport pad and walk left to the lift. Drop the teleport and blow the Elf Horn to summon Florin the Dwarf. When he appears, command him to sleep. Enter the lift, move to the second floor and find Elrand – take the Miolnir from him. If he's reluctant to release the Miolnir, command him to be happy and try again. Now teleport back to the lift.

Summon Thor and give him the Miolnir. Command him to help and he will fix the control box. Now command him to sleep. Enter the lift and move to the basement. Pick up the red herring, walk right and drop the teleport key. Pick up the power pong plant, cast the Fumaticus Protectum spell, drop the plant and the red herring, and pick up the teleport key.

Enter the lift and move to the ground floor. Walk right until you find a laser – pick it up. Summon Lady Rosmar, give the laser to her and command her to help. She should burn a hole through the wall. Stand on the pool of liquid and cast the Amarous Photonicus spell. Go back to the lift and move to the first floor. Walk to the extreme right of the floor, pick up the trumpet and teleport. Command Thor to wake up, then enter the lift and move it to the fourth floor. Move right, summon Thor and command him to help.

Return to the lift and move to level two. Walk all the way to the right. Summon Elrand, give him the trumpet and command him to help. He will blow the trumpet and make the wall collapse.

The key to solving the game lies in the crystals. One is found on the fourth floor, another at the far end of the roof and the last on the second floor. Collect them all – when you have them take them to the ground floor and get the crystal ball from Samsun. Get the white gold ring from the second floor, then go back to the end of the ground floor and summon a character. When he or she appears, give the crystal ball. Pick up the white gold ring and cast the Crystallium Spectralis spell (NB: you also need the Wand of Command). Throw all three crystals at Gimbal to free him.

SOME GENERAL TIPS

A banshee is trapped inside the glowing bottle. Once the bottle is dropped, the banshee is released. Command it to help for more clues.

To please Orik the Cleric at the end of the second floor, give him the Book of Shadows (it can be found on the same floor). To get to Orik, destroy the wall between you and him – go to the fourth floor, move right and summon Thor. When he appears, command him to help (NB: he must have the Miolnir) – he will launch a bolt of lightning at the tower which loosens a stone. This must be done so Elrand can destroy the wall which hides Orik.

If you pick up the sticky bun on the first floor you won't be able to drop it, thus limiting the amount of objects you can carry. Pick up the book of runes along with the runestone and you can read it. If you wish to fix the broken talisman, give Florin the Dwarf the bar of gold, the broken talisman and the tube of glue – then command him to help.

LEGEND OF KAGE

If you're having problems negotiating the five sections of this arcade conversion, then take heed of the advice sent in by Joe Carney **of Gateshead, Tyne and Wear – you should be able to go far . . .**

THE FOREST
The best tactic here is to climb a wide tree and shoot your stars at all of the creatures before they hit the ground. Make sure you use the prayer book. As soon as you've killed enough targets, run left as fast as possible.

THE MOAT
This is the easiest of all the sections. Kill the blue creatures with your stars and falling red ninjas with your sword.

THE RAMPART
Don't stop moving – jump onto each level as quickly as you can, using your stars to kill any red ninjas on the way.

THE CASTLE
Stay on the ground floor and keep moving up the stairs as fast as possible. On the top floor move quickly to dodge the red wizard and cut the princess with your sword.

THE FOREST
Stay underneath the female boxer and keep hitting her with your sword until she dies. You can then start the game all over again . . .

REPTON 3 (Superior Software)

Here's a list of the passwords for all of the screens on this mediocre ***Boulderdash*** **clone. Thank you** David Craddock **of Elland, West Yorks**

1A) PRELUDE
1B) CITADEL
1C) MORNING
1D) AWKWARD
1E) FRITTER
1F) LAWLESS
1G) RATION
1H) TOBACCO

2A) TOCCATA
2B) UPSTART
2C) OCTAGON
2D) CHAOTIC
2E) MAJESTY
2F) REVENUE
2G) FORESEE
2H) RESERVE

3A) FINALE
3B) ENLIVEN
3C) CONTEST
3D) ILLEGAL
3E) APPEASE
3F) STUDENT
3G) AVERAGE
3H) PHOENIX

BREAKTHRU (US Gold)

Just before you enter the mountain section, push the joystick up so the car goes to the top of the screen. Now push right, press the fire button and hold down the space bar – the car wheelies all the way through the level in no time! Better still though, is the fact that you can use this tactic on all the levels to complete the game with ease . . . Ho Ho! Thanks to Andrew Parker **of Middlesborough for that one.**

GAUNTLET (US Gold)

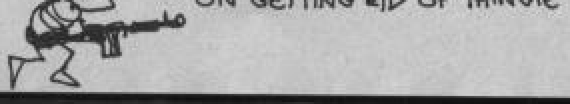
Here are a couple of useful tips for budding explorers, courtesy of Paul Anthony **from Warmley, Bristol. Read, digest and remember . . .**

If you're using the cassette version, the program keeps loading in levels until the tape stops. Don't fret when this happens – it's not the end of the game, as some of you seem to think. All you have to do is zero the tape counter at the start of side two, and when the tape finishes, rewind until the counter reads around 49. Now press play and the computer should load in the old levels again.

Always plug in two joysticks – as one player's strength gets low, press the fire button on the second joystick to continue with that character.

And that wraps up this giant tips section for this month. If YOU **have any tips, POKEs, maps or whatever, then send them to me at** ZZAP! TIPS, PO BOX 10, Ludlow, Shropshire SY8 1DB. **You might even end up like** Jim Blackler **of Lancaster and find a T-shirt and some software in the post!**

If you're fed up with the type of tips printed, or have suggestions about how you think this section could be improved, or even if you are happy with things as they are, then by all means write in. Any sort of feedback about this section of the magazine is appreciated. Even if you think it's CRA





A complete monthly guide by the infamous White Wizard for all 64 owners who prefer games involving typed commands rather than wiggled joysticks.

ZZAP! adventure



This month the White Wizard casts an eye on multi-user interactive games – the first in a two part series. What have MUD, Shades, and Valley got to offer you? What's Level 9 up to on the MUG front? Not to mention a brief mention of two games from Incentive – are they worth £7.95? And a game from hitherto unknown Tunstallsoft – is it worth £5.50? Ol' Whitey casts his wand over the waters and comes up with the juice . . . (What! Sack that wizard – Ed)

Apache Gold and Winter Wonderland

Incentive, £7.95 each, cassette only

As previewed recently by the Wiz, these two little fantasies have been awarded the accolade of Medallion Adventures by Incentive – which means that Ian Andrew reckons they are the pick of the bunch, selected from the games sent in by users of the *Graphic Adventure Creator* to the Incentive dungeon.

Well, I didn't see the rest of the bunch so I can't be certain about the overall quality. Certainly both these games match up well to the adventures sent in to the Wiz by readers, but then they cost rather a lot more. I would reckon that the



going rate for a home-brew game nowadays is about £2.50. Add to that a premium of say, £1 for professional packaging, and that gives you £3.50. Then add another pound for the backing of a major software house, which should offer some sort of peace of mind when buying (and also means that if the game doesn't load you can get your money back) and you get £4.50. For the sake of capitalist enterprise, let's make that £4.95.

£4.95 is a good way off £7.95 in my book. And I'm afraid that I really can't recommend these games as value for money. Not that they're bad, understand. I've already given you most of the details, but suffice it to say that in *Apache Gold* you trot around in your carriage, escape from injuns,

and suffer the indignities of the injun spirit world. It's a nice, tight little game that would go down very well at £4.95. But not at . . . OK, I've made my point.

I didn't find *Winter Wonderland* quite so enjoyable. In this game you crash-land in Tibet and must make your way past hungry wolves and thin ice to a Shangri-La type environment complete with hotel and tropical gardens. I thought the puzzles were slightly better than those in *Apache*, but the pics weren't quite so hot, and the storyline didn't come off so well.

Both games have all the attributes of *GAC* – multi-command input using commas and 'then', and IT for the last noun entered. But the fact is that the games themselves don't really require much more than two word inputs. As adventures written by non-professionals I reckon that they do justice to *GAC*, are amusing and well-thought out, and are worth less than the asking price. Come on, Incentive – what about leading the field with a potent little budget adventure label?

Winter Wonderland

Atmosphere	60%
Interaction	60%
Lasting Interest	58%
Value For Money	52%
Overall	**59%**

Apache Gold

Atmosphere	62%
Interaction	60%
Lasting Interest	57%
Value For Money	52%
Overall	**59%**

Herakles – The Early Trials

Tunstallsoft, £5.95, diskette only



Mmmmmm . . . Interrrressst-ing . . . What can we say about this one? Not easy.

First, I've never heard of Tunstallsoft – but they've sent me a disk to review, and it stands out from most of the other home-brew items I get sent because it is reasonably well packaged and contains clear instructions.

Second, unlike any other home brew game, it really uses the disk to give you lengthy text descriptions.

Third, the descriptions are pretty good, and the atmosphere of the game is much enhanced as a result. There are also some pictures, some of which are very attractive.

The game is the first of a two-part series, and as Herakles you must complete a number of tasks drawn from Greek mythology, including grabbing wild boars, cleaning stables, and killing hydras. There's obviously been a good deal of research carried out here, with both place-names and individuals carefully created with a view to their legendary counterparts.

Unfortunately, for some reason I wasn't really grabbed by this game. The parser is pretty primitive – it only accepts two word inputs, examines the first four letters only, and is slightly quirky in other respects. For example, while you can enter certain words (WAIT, for example) in some locations, in other locations they are not understood. Furthermore the parser does not specify which word it doesn't understand – a small point, but as readers know, it's one that helps maintain interest when trying to solve difficult puzzles.

I suppose it may have been this that dampened my ardour somewhat – in what is for the most part a text-only game I like to have pretty comprehensive interaction and input facilities. But in this case I think I ought to make an exception and set my personal feelings apart, for the following reasons . . .

First, the text descriptions, which are highly detailed and very nicely written. Some of them run to almost an entire screenful and are most atmospheric. Obviously they are too long to reside in memory and to call them up you enter the special command T. This loads in a text file relevant to that location and to others in the neighbourhood, you can then get the full description of your whereabouts. The default descriptions are very short – usually only a few words on the top line of the screen.

Second, the gameplay. There's quite a lot involved, with far more puzzles to solve than the average home-brew game. Some of them are quite original, and I've yet to discover any that are seriously lacking in logic.

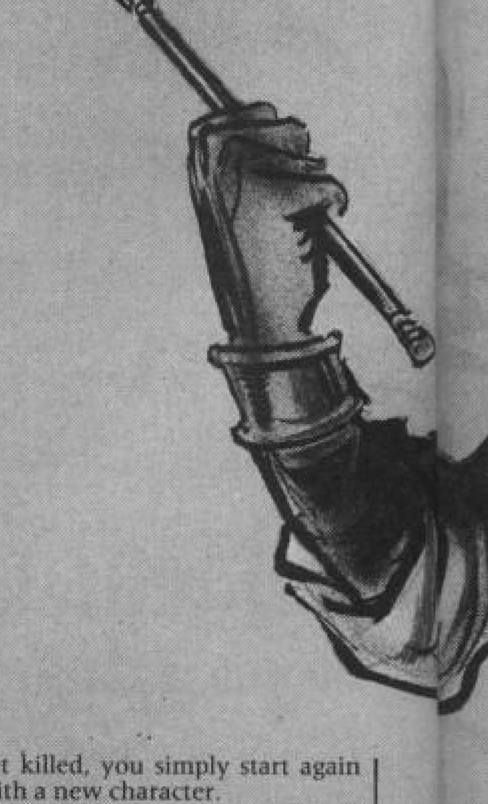
Third, the graphics, which although few and far between are attractive full-screen hi-res efforts.

And lastly, the price – £5.95 can't be all that bad, when Tunstallsoft have obviously put in so much effort. Apparently the game is part-Quilled, which explains the limitations of the parser, but extra bits have obviously been tacked on to expand the presentation. Despite my own reservations, I can't help feeling that this is a good deal that should not be passed over by disk drive owners, and certainly not by anyone with an interest in Ancient Greece.

Tunstallsoft can be contacted at **17 Victoria Park Road, Tunstall, Stoke on Trent ST6 6DX**

Atmosphere	68%
Interaction	58%
Lasting Interest	70%
Value For Money	72%
Overall	**70%**

Are YOU a MUG?



Where can you tally-ho round an 800-location adventure in the company of dozens of other adventurers, all tearing the innards out of each other and interacting in manners both shameful and (sometimes) honourable? In a MUG, of course. And if that leaves you scratching your pate in puzzlement, check it all out here as the Wiz goes on-line and gets his beard trimmed in combat over the phone-lines . . .

A MUG is a Multi-User Game in which players, who operate simultaneously within the adventure in real-time, can interact with each other in manner fair or foul. The best known is MUD, short for Multi-User Dungeon, but there are others, each of which we shall be checking out over the next month or so. If you're fed up with solving the same sort of puzzles over and over again, or are feeling lonely in whatever location you happen to be trapped in, then MUG's may have the answer for you.

There have already been games that have attempted to offer a multi-user format – the *Causes of Chaos*, for example – or *The Prince*. And of course there are numerous D&D type scenarios which allow four players or more to play together, each controlling one or more characters. But to achieve real interaction you can only run these games on a machine capable of processing several – sometimes dozens – of players simultaneously. And that means running it on a Mini or Mainframe, not on a micro.

So it is that, for example, BT's MUD runs on a VAX, located in West London, and Compunet MUD runs on a DEC10. To play, you hook your micro up to a modem and dial up the game. Once you've logged on, you can enter the world of the program and start to knock the stuffing out of anyone in reach as you scrabble to achieve power and status. If you get killed, you simply start again with a new character.

The first thing to note about all these games is that interaction is the prime attraction. We'll be looking at BT MUD, Compunet MUD and Valley, Shades (from Micronet), and possibly one or two others in the series, but they all have several things in common. First, they don't offer that many playing commands compared with your normal adventure. The reason is simple – most of these games rely on action rather than puzzle-solving for their thrills. If you want to kill your neighbour, far better just to type KILL than ATTACK THE NEIGHBOUR WITH THE SILVER SWORD.

Secondly, their response times

aren't as quick as you might expect from a program running on a 32-bit-plus machine. That's because the computer's also having to process everybody else's game at the same time. And that in turn brings us to the vexed question of cost . . .

. . . All of these games cost rather a lot to play if you find yourself getting addicted to them – and that's highly likely! You can check out the costs elsewhere on this page, but if you find yourself playing regularly, then you (or someone else) could be in for a nasty shock when the telephone bill arrives.

There's no doubt, however, that games like MUD and Shades can be very exciting when you first log on. Don't underestimate the feeling of exhilaration when you find yourself confronting a character who you know is being controlled by another human player somewhere else in the world (not necessarily just in the UK). And don't underestimate the terror when you realise that he/she is more powerful than you, carries a large axe, and is after your blood!

Most of these games offer similar scenarios. Both MUD (in its various forms) and Shades set the player a series of challenges that result in your gaining points. The more points you amass, the more powers you wield in your battle against the game and the other characters. Points may be acquired by a range of actions, from finding and using special objects, gathering treasures, or defeating your fellow adventurers in battle.

Wizard status, the ultimate accolade for a MUD player, is a powerful incentive to play in itself. A wizard can do virtually anything, from killing another player to turning him/her into a frog. As a wizard, playing MUD begins to look suspiciously like a permanent means of obtaining instant on-line gratification of your most anti-social whims, but in reality wizards are very carefully monitored by the system (and those who run it). Most use their unlimited power to good effect, and the vision of achieving wizard status keeps many players hooked to their terminals late into the night.

Next month we'll look at each of these games in more detail, together with some print-outs taken during gameplay so that you can see for yourself what your missing. And if you're already involved, why not write in to the Wiz and give us the benefit of your advice, opinions, and views on gameplay politics? Remember that you can mailbox the Wiz on BT-GOLD 83:JNL251, or write to me c/o ZZAP! as usual.

British Telecom MUD

This is the largest on-line game currently running the UK. There are over 800 locations, 500-plus users, and a whole sub-culture that has slowly built up around the program.

BT's MUD is in fact an updated version of the original game devised and run on a mainframe at Essex University. The game changes fairly regularly and has a comprehensive set of commands that make playing simple, but quite complex in terms of strategy.

BT's MUD is also not as expensive as it was. You can get the playing cost down to as little 50p per hour if you buy 'credits' in bulk at £15.00 a throw. For the more cautious, your starter pack (cost £4.95)gets you three hours free play. Unlike other MUGS, MUD is a network in itself – so you don't need to pay extra to belong to a service like Compunet or Micronet. Full contact details next month.



Compunet MUD

This is an earlier version of MUD that is run by BT, but its reduced size (over 400 locations) and (usually) smaller number of players at one go makes for a slightly more intimate and less intimidating scenario for the beginner.

Compunet MUD, however, may work out more expensive for some. The connect charge is £1.75 per hour (inc VAT), and if you're not a member of Compunet you'll have to shell out another £7.50 for associate membership before you log on. There are between 100 and 200 active users at present, with usually about 5 players on-line at any one time, rising to as much as 15 or 20 at peak periods. You can only access Compunet MUD between 6pm and 8am and at weekends.

At weekends you can also sample Valley, which is a mini-MUD scenario that is also incorporated within the larger BT MUD but is here implemented as a separate game. Good for novices, who can log on in the morning at weekends for a special reduced rate of 50p per hour.

Compunet are also planning a new game, Federation, due for launch in June. This is a space-trading game about which we'll be printing preview information next month, along with full contact details for the Compunet system.

Micronet SHADES

Shades is another MUD-like game that can handle up to 64 players simultaneously. Although it runs on the viewdata-type Micronet system, it offers full teletext scrolling so no worries on that score. Unlike MUD, however, the game is split into sections with only eight players active within any one section. There's also a special section for novices.

As in MUD there are several commands for interacting, ranging from GIGGLE to PET (?!), and the object is to amass enough points to achieve wizard status. There are currently about 30 wizards active, and an experienced player should be able to drive a character through to wizard status within about five weeks.

The playing cost for Shades compares well with other systems. It's not as cheap as BT MUD can be, but at 1.62p per minute (about a pound per hour) plus guaranteed local call access, it could be a good bet – especially for people outside the London area.

Next Month's MUG Runneth Over!

I'll give you full data tables on all the systems, print-outs, and assessments of the different games. And we'll have a few words from Pete Austin of Level 9 on the subject of MUGS, but without the need to go on-line! Sounds dandy, so hook up that modem and stay tuned . . .

Clever Contacts

Every so often in an adventurer's life comes a moment of everlasting glory. Whether it's because you've just been carried shoulder-high through Middle Earth, emerged unscathed from the Underground Empire, or completed your 1000th game, there's only one true means of celebrating your success – become one of the Legendary Clever Contacts.

Write to the Wiz with the names of the games you've solved and your full contact details. You can include a phone number if you wish, but remember that you may receive many calls – so check first with other members of your household.

If you're getting in touch with one of the Clever Contacts, make sure that you enclose an SAE or – if you're phoning – keep the contact to a reasonable hour. These heroes and heroines are doing a good job – don't abuse them, and they'll reward you with much useful advice.

Pirate Adventure, Circus, Zzzz, Terrormolinos, Subsunk, The Sorceror of Claymorgue Castle, Quest of Merravid, The Hobbit
Danny Dinneen, 12 Bishopscourt Way, Wilton, Cork, Republic of Ireland

Red Moon, Emerald Isle, Worm in Paradise, Hulk, Hobbit, Upper Gumtree, Hacker, Grand Larceny, Merry Christmas from Melbourne House, Robin of Sherwood, Snowqueen, Kentilla, Gremlins, Eureka, Terrormolinos, Lords of Time, Pirate Adventure, Sherlock, Bored of the Rings
Jason Jennings, 102 Berkely Road, Shirley, Solihull, Birmingham, West Midlands B90 2HU

Ultima IV, Zork II, Suspended, Pirate Adventure, Voodoo Castle, Critical Mass, Wizard and the Princess, Mission Asteroid, Mummy's Curse, Mission Impossible, Robin of Sherwood, Masquerade
Derek Wong, 42 Ingram Road, Thornton Heath, Surrey CR4 8EB

Hampstead, Sherlock, Bored of the Rings, Boggit, Fantastic Four, Lord of the Rings, Terrormolinos, Castle of Terror, Mordens Quest, Zzzzz . . ., Heroes of Karn, Twin Kingdom Valley
David Sutherland, 54 Wendover Road, Eltham, London SE9 6PB or 01 319 3395 after 6pm

Zork I, II, III, Adventureland, Dangermouse in BFC, Earthbound, The Helm, Marie Celeste, Temple of Terror, Valkyrie 17, Temple of Vran, Mask of the Sun, Lords of Time, Dallas Quest, Infidel, Mystery Munroe Manor, Gremlins, Supergran, Planetfall, Ulysses, Blade of Blackpoole, Seastalker, HitchHikers, Ultima III, Search for King Solomons Mines, Skull Island, Murder on the Waterfront, Suspended, Cutthroats, Sorcerer, Enchanter, Ninja, Stranded, Hulk, Mindshadow, Lord of the Rings, Starcross, SubSunk, Worm in Paradise, Hampstead, Classic Adventure, Colossal Cave, Terrormolinos, Robin of Sherwood, Sherlock, Claymorgue Castle, Emerald Isle, Wizard of Akyrz, Return to Eden, Red Moon, Never-ending Story, Escape From Pulsar 7, Perseus and Andromeda, Golden Baton, Bored of the Rings, Empire of Karn, Ket 3, Feasibility Experiment, Lucifers Realm, Pilgrim, Secret Mission, Treasure Island, Wishbringer, Circus, Arrow of Death 1 & 2, Ten Little Indians, Ring of Power, Quest for Holy Grail, Kentilla . . . (More next issue!)
Margot Stuckey, 14 Marampo St, Marayong, NSW 2148, Australia

Hulk, Spiderman, Voodoo Castle, Hobbit, Pirate Adventure, Merry Christmas, Robin of Sherwood, Price of Magik, Lord of the Rings
Nigel Leather, 45 Moreton Street, Winnington, Northwich, Cheshire CW8 4DH Tel: 0606 781028

The Golden Baton, Worm in Paradise, Hobbit, Fourth Protocol (Pt 3 only)
Andrew Blackman, 133 Ashen Drive, Dartford, Kent DA1 3LY Tel: 0322 76887 5.30-8.30pm

Dungeon Adventure, Lord of the Rings, Quest for the Holy Grail, Hampstead, Lords of Time, Inca Curse, Espionage Island, Planet of Death
David Lemon, 14 Norton Place, Dunfermline, FIfe KY11 4RH Tel: 0383 728353 after 6pm Mon-Fri

Leather Goddesses of Phobos, Zork III, Terrormolinos, Never Ending Story, Heroes of Karn, Mission 1, Gremlins, Robin of Sherwood
Ron McKenzie, 3 Silverstream, Freystrop, Haverfordwest, Dyfed SA61 2SN

Adventureland, SubSunk, Heroes of Karn, Empire of Karn, Munroe Manor, Hacker, Classic Adventure, All early Infocom titles . . .
Chris Fleming, 235 Meola Road, Pt Chev, Auckland, N Zealand, Tel: 867074

Leather Goddesses, Ballyhoo, Enchanter, Sorcerer, Spellbreaker, Wishbringer, HitchHikers, Seastalker, Questprobe III, Hulk, Spiderman, Exodus Ultima III, Ultima IV, Return to Eden, Worm in Paradise, Red Moon, Colossal Adventure, Dungeon Adventure, Sorcerer of Claymorgue Castle, Heroes of Karn, Perseus and Andromeda, Nine Princes in Amber, Gremlins
Guy Thomas, 17 Borstal Hill, Whitstable, Kent CT5 4NA Tel: (0227) 274846

Voodoo Castle, Heroes of Karn, Pirate Adventure, Ten Little Indians, Hobbit, Lost City, Gremlins, Wizard of Akyrz, Quest for the Holy Grail, Zim Sala bim, Island Adventure, Castle Dracula
Paul Flanagan, 6 Corry, Belleek, Co Fermanagh, N Ireland Tel: 036565 594

Wizard Tips!

Be canny! Be crafty! Be tipped off by the Wiz with this month's selection of unbelievably appropriate tips. And while you're about it, why not be immortal as well – simply send in your tips for publication here, and the Wiz will bestow upon you the undying honour of a mention in this noble column.

The following tips are brought to you courtesy of Demi-Wizards **J Coal** of Bedfordshire, **Jason Jennings** of Birmingham, **P Napolitano** of Slough, and of course the Wiz 'imself.

The Pawn:
Look in the fountain for a chit. It's an IOU from Honest John.

Worm in Paradise:
You must be a bison before you can get a ticket.
The dagget will find an invitation behind the wallpaper in the Socialist's home – to find his address, hang about around the flatlands until he appears, drops his wallet, and gets nabbed.
Kick the behemoth.

Robin of Sherwood:
There are STILL some people unable to get out of the dungeon in the first location! Climb onto someone's shoulders, look through the grate, grab the guard's ankle, strangle him, get his sword, and slide back the bolt. You can't get clearer than that!
Also: EXAMINE . . . the sacks of grain in the tax collector's cart, the tree (after climbing it), and the statue outside the castle.

Return to Eden:
Search the nest to find stolen objects.

Redhawk:
To enter the Sewer from the Heath Station you need the book from the museum, when exchanged for the vase.
From the Sewer Maze to the Reactor – DWWUU, and from there to the station – DDEEEU.
Oxford gardens, Small Man Street, and Brook Court are only accessible by taxi or flight.

Crime Schedules in Redhawk:

12.00 Fusor Jewellers
13.11 Techno Bank
13.55 Rat Warehouse
16.12 Merlin Gallery



Adventure News

Level 9 Go Interactive!

Level 9, in conjunction with Rainbird, are bringing out *Knight Orc* – a new 'interactive' adventure. At long last the lads from Weston-Super-Mare are going 'state of the art' and we'll be able to do a bit of chatting to other characters.

The game features digitised graphics, independent interactive characters, new commands including FOLLOW and GO-TO-A-NAMED-PLACE, and a new 'improved' parser. You'll be able to pick it up in March for £14.95 on tape or disk.

Details are rather sparse at the moment, but the Wiz expects to have seen a version by the time you read this. The game is set in three parts, and you play the part of an orc with the job of getting your own back on the human race. The Wiz has grumbled for some time now about the lack of interaction in Level 9's games – now at last it looks as if we have a starting point for a series of adventures that could really hold their own in today's market.

Melbourne Hobbit Saga Continues . . .

Looks like we could see the sequel to *Lord of the Rings* some time in May or June of this year. The working title at the moment is *Where Hobbits Dare . . .*

. . . Let's keep our fingers crossed and hope that the game lives up to its illustrious ancestor, *The Hobbit*, and improves on its immediate predecessor, *LOR* – noted for its rather buggy operation and slow response time.

The Growing Pains of Adrian Mole from Mosaic should get to you some time in February via Virgin. Meanwhile Mosaic's own *Yes, Minister* is now postponed (again) to the autumn of this year.

After *Knight Orc* from Rainbird/Level 9 will come *The Guild of Thieves*, the next opus from Magnetic Scrolls (of *The Pawn* fame). And if you've got an Amiga you can now play *Silicon Dreams* – Lucky old you!

Wizard's Mailbag

First, a very late Christmas card from **Pat Winstanley**. This lady has rendered invaluable assistance to adventurers far and wide over the last few months through Adventure Contact, her home-brewed magazine. Pat now also produces a little number called Adventure Shop, which gives details of sources for adventure software. Her address is 13 Hollington Way, Wigan.

Pat also wonders who the White Wizard really is. This is rather an old chestnut by now and the Wiz has to remark that the answer to this question is not really of that much interest – and certainly not as interesting as the question! My identity remains humbly obscured – and, besides, when you've orphaned as many orcs as I have, you have to be careful.

Now for some news of the Clever Contacts – some of which is rather disturbing. First, **Derek Wong** writes in offering help in the Clever Contacts column, but includes in his list a whole load of games I've never heard of. Now the Wiz doesn't get around as much as he used to, but I'm still surprised that Derek could name so many games I'd never heard of – viz: *Cranston Manor, Escape Rungistan, Captain Cuckoo, Kod, Softporn,* and *Serpent's Star*. Please enlighten me, readers. In the meantime I've included your entry, but mentioned only the titles I could recognise. Forgive my presumption, Derek, and write to me if you would like some additions to be made.

More serious, and somewhat (as I said) disturbing, is this letter from **Mr Gray** of Dagenham:

''I wrote to one of your clever contacts with a problem I was having with Infocom's Starcross *. . . Some weeks later I received a reply from the gent in question, stating that he couldn't help with my problem although he had completed the adventure – or so he said – and I couldn't understand why he couldn't help* (neither can I – Wiz).

''However, he enclosed a list of 150 adventure titles including Starcross, *the solutions to any of which I could have for the sum of £1 each. This is in my opinion a con by someone trying to make a few pounds. If that's what he wants why doesn't he say so, and leave those who don't want complete solutions alone. I just wasted time and money waiting for something I wasn't going to get from him unless I paid cash.''*

Hmmmm . . . Well, let's make one thing clear, mein Wizardlings. Der Clever Contacts column is not for the purposes of accruing vast amounts of moolah. It is there to provide a FREE service to adventurers, given by worthy heroes to deserving colleagues. Of course there's no reason why someone shouldn't sell adventure solutions if they think they can find someone to buy them, but please don't use the Clever Contacts page to do it. The gentleman in question has had his name removed from the column and if the Bearded One hears any more stories like this then he shall take immediate action of the unleash-Balrog-crunch-munch-belch variety. You have been warned!

. . . and another convert to disk drives, this time **Sean York** of Chelmsford. *''I recently got a disk drive and decided to get some disk adventure games. Although my choice was limited I did manage to get a game called* Moonmist *from Infocom. Having never played an Infocom game before I was amazed! This game is brilliant! Please let's have more features on Infocom. Let's also have an adventure chart . . . ''*

I don't like to be a spoil-sport – especially when other people have written in about having an adventure chart – but I'm afraid it's out of the question. I realise that other magazines might carry such things, but there won't be one in this column for the simple reason that they are very susceptible to manipulation and misrepresentation. I speak with first-hand experience of this matter, and am confident that readers prefer to have no chart at all than one which is not only unreliable, but is also not in the interests of the adventure-playing community. You can be sure that the best games are the ones that get the best ratings – so stay tuned in.

''Finally, some quickies'', continues Sean:

a) Where and how much is Suspect *as I want to get a copy.*
b) More on Infocom, please.
c) Get more pages for your section.
d) Why don't you go to any Commodore shows? I would love to talk to you.
e) More on Infocom, please.
f) Thanks and keep up the good work.

To which the Magickal Man of the Whirling Wand replies:

a) After some months of confusion, I can now confirm that *Suspect* is available from Activision for £24.95. Go for it!

b) The next program from Infocom is, I think, something called *Hollywood Capers* – more news next month.

c) Ask the Boss, who (if he's got any respect for the Wiz) will say no. Also, when the Wiz gets over to the USA later this year, you'll hear enough about Infocom to make you feel well and truly sick of them.

d) I'd be delighted to attend any Commodore show at which the ZZAP! team were appearing. Whether I'll actually talk to your or not depends on a number of factors – do you chew garlic or wipe your nose on other people's sleeves?

e) Haven't you asked this already?

f) Mon plaisir, mein Vizzardling. Ze fiver vill cumm in most useful.

Finally, a truly stunning entry from **John Abberley** of Dorset. John has sent in an entire map of Ultima IV, which he tentatively suggests we might be able to reproduce in the magazine. John's map is an astonishing achievement, covering eleven sides of A4 graph paper. Unfortunately, to publish it would require a special supplement to the magazine and several thousand pounds. Ah well . . .

. . . But I might make one suggestion, John. I suspect that there are many other players who would relish a map. If you could tidy it up a bit and make sure it was well annotated, then I'm sure you could sell some copies for a few bob. Just don't do it through Clever Contacts . . .



Contacting The Wiz

The Wiz always reads letters with pleasure but cannot unfortunately promise either to print them or to reply to them. Problems with space and time, despite my almost unbelievable powers of tempo-spatial manipulation, make such promises difficult to keep.

However, if you want to enter for Clever Contacts, send in some tips, or get Rrapping on adventures in general, then write to me at:

The White Wizard's Dungeon, PO Box 10, Ludlow, Shropshire SY8 1AQ. You can also get me on 83:JNL251 if you have a modem and access to BT Gold. Please note that I no longer log onto Prestel/Micronet.

NAME THAT FRIDGE AND WIN!

American Football Goodies on offer from NEXUS



25 Copies of SUPER SUNDAY to be won!

Have you ever wondered what American Football is all about? All those enormous players running at each other and tackling people who don't even have the ball! All that padding and throwing and catching. What's it all about? I ask myself. Mind you, some of that padding would come in handy when the Spiky Haired Ones tackle me when I come back from the Ludlow Sarnie Shop with their brekkies. . . .

Well, I've been spending my Sunday evenings glued to Channel 4's coverage of this All-American sport and I've begun to make some sense of it all. American Football is a game that could be described as a cross between rugby and chess – a highly involved sport that mixes skill and strategy with speed and intuition. Now that the New York Giants have won the 1987 Superbowl **Nexus** are about to bring all the thrills and spills of the National Football League to your Commodore screen.

To celebrate the Giants' victory and to get everyone in the mood for the launch of *Super Sunday* **Nexus** are offering an American football shirt, a cap, an American football and a copy of the game as first prize in this competition. Five second prize winners are to collect a cap and a copy of the game, with 25 copies of *Super Sunday* available for runners up.

I did try to persuade the Big Cheeses at **Nexus** to offer a full set of American Football padding as the top prize so I could test it out on the Sandwich Run before sending it on to the winner, but then I worked out that my feeble frame wouldn't fill a set of American Football gear, so I gave up on the idea.

Anyway, as a result of the Sunday afternoon studies, your faithful Comps Minion is able to ask a quintet of questions about the game. Who says education doesn't pay? Scribble your answers on a postcard or the back of an envelope and whizz them off to me at **CHATEAU REFRIGERATOR, c/o ZZAP! 64, PO BOX 10, Ludlow, Shropshire SY8 1DB**, making sure they arrive by 12th March.

1) What is 'a safety'?

2) What does the slang term 'Play Action' refer to?

3) Name the teams that met in the 1986 Superbowl

4) Who was the Starting Quarterback on the winning side of the 1986 Superbowl?

5) What is the real name of 'The Refrigerator'

BACKNUMBERS 1986

No 1 May 1985
Collector's Piece! 132 Packed Pages! Elite Gold Me· ·· less than NINE Sensuous Sizzlers! ·· ··nty Bob Strikes Back! P ·· ··rowther Intervie ·· ZZAP! Challenge! ·· Staff of Karnath Map! A look a· ·· ·ilities on the 64! The White Wizard! Jen ·· ··ter! And More!
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116 Pow ·· ··ges! Theatre Europe Gold Medal! El ·· Sizzlers! Lode Runner! Inter ·· ··Pages of Tasty Ti ·· rblaster Quiz! US Gold ·· ··d More!
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No 3 July 1985
116 Punc ·· ··es! Dropzone AND Entombed Gold Me ·· ··al! FIVE Stupendous Sizz ·· ··! Gribbly's D ·· Part I! SEVEN Pa ·· ··or Map! Arcade Conversions ·· Minter! Colossus Chess Plays My Chess ·· ··d More!
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124 Psychedelic Pages! Spindizzy Gold Medal! SIX Saucy Sizzlers! International Karate! Cauldron II! Starquake! Spellbound! ZZAP!TIONAIRE Results! Infocom Interview Part II! Steve Evans Interview! EIGHT Pages of Terrestrial Tips! Doomdark's Revenge Map! Last Four Levels of The Eidolon Mapped! Shadowspiel! Gary Liddon's Technical Bit in the Middle! Rignall Loses Challenge! ZZAPBACK!! Terminal Man! And More!

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116 Pompous Pages! NO Gold Medal! FOUR Stupendous Sizzlers! Green Beret! Tau Ceti! Infiltrator! Kik Start II! Controversial Musician's Ball Interview! Vidcom Art Package Reviewed! Penn Wins ANOTHER Challenge! Daily Llama – Minter Diary! NINE Pages of Tasty Tips! Cauldron II Map! Hacker Map! Mercenary Map AND Tips! ZZAPBACK! Terminal Man – Final Episode! And Even More!

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124 Paginated Pages! Roger Kean Leaves ZZAP! TWO Gold Medals! Ghosts 'n' Goblins! Graphic Adventure Creator! FIVE Sensuous Sizzlers! Knight Games! Arac! The Second City! Hercules! Split Personalities! All American Gold Rush – Previews of FOURTEEN US Gold Games! The Musician's Other Ball – Commodore's Music Expansion System Reviewed! Penn Loses Challenge! Daily Llama – Conclusion of the Minter Dairy! SEVEN Pages of Topical Tips! Ark Pandora Map And Solution! RMS Titanic Map! Masterblaster III! Software Cuties Special! Uchi Mata Preview! ZZAPSTICK! Chris Butler Interviewed! ZZAPBACK! And More!

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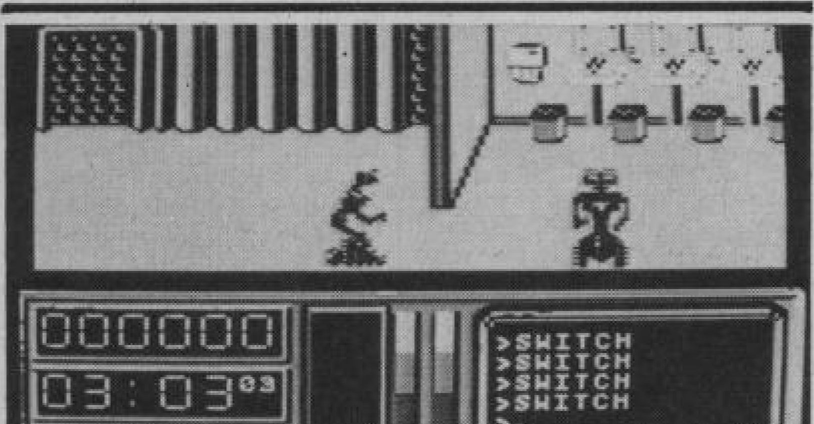
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FROM SPACE TO SLAPSTICK

Andy Wilson, the programmer responsible for bringing Dan Dare to the Commodore screen, is currently working for **Advance**. He's working on a project which involves a couple of classic comedians – Laurel and Hardy.

Andy's attempting to capture flavour of the silver-screen stars' original comedies, and is using a split-screen technique called Cine-Vision that produces a display rather similar to that used for *Spy Vs Spy*. The game can be enjoyed by one or two players, and whether you're pitting your wits against the computer or a friend, the aim is to catch up with the other comedian.

Stan and Laurel romp around, stumbling into the Keystone Cops, and an annoying doggie – not forgetting the custard pies that are an essential part of slapstick comedy. Sounds like fun – we should find out for sure in a month or so . . .

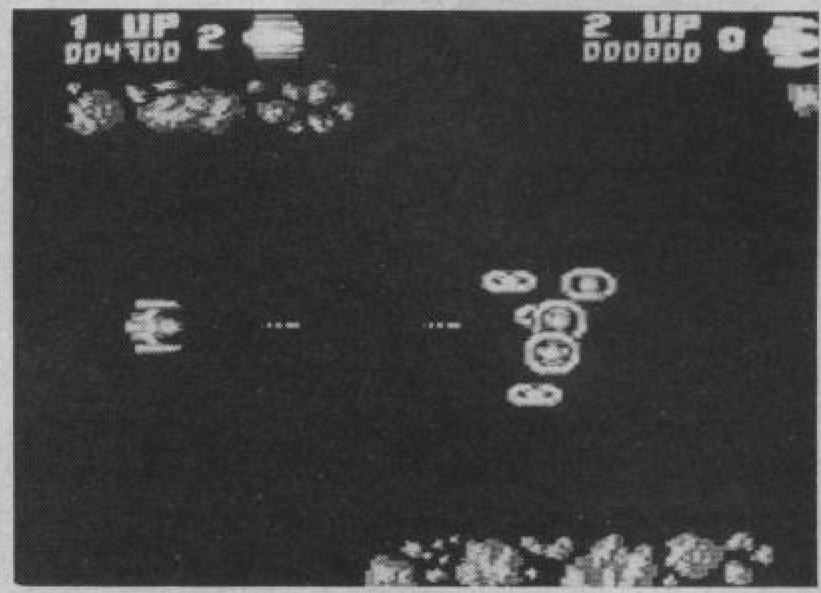


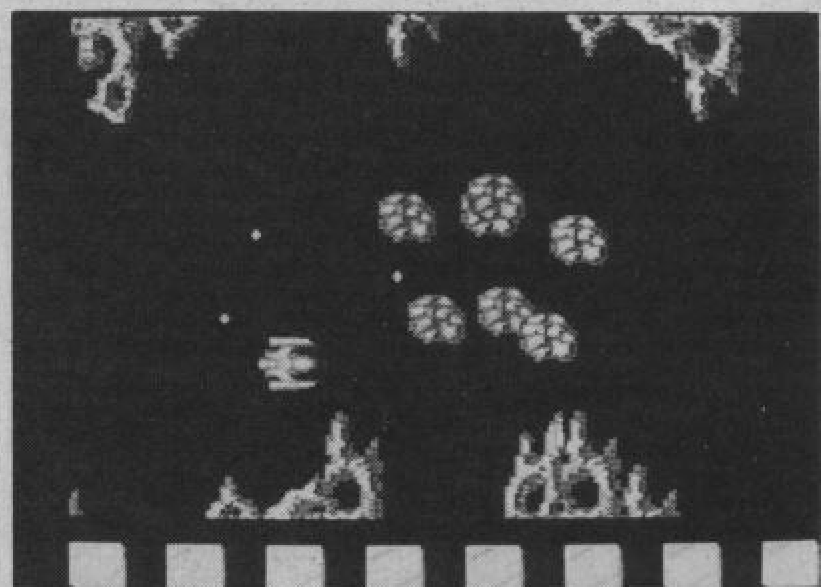
SHORT CIRCUIT

A two-part arcade game licensed from the science fiction film which has just had its Royal Premiere in London, *Short Circuit* puts the player into the role of a robot called No 5 who has malfunctioned and developed human emotions. Naturally, the robot's designers are rather interested and want to dismantle the unfortunate mechanised slave, but the all-thinking, all-dancing robot just wants to escape from the factory where it was created and live a quiet life.

The first part of the **Ocean** tie-in is played over a scrolling 3D forced perspective landscape, in which No 5 has to find the correct items to build a decoy robot. When the decoy is built and sent on its way, No 5 has a chance to dash through the countryside to freedom, avoiding the pursuing security forces and Disneyesque forest animals which frolic beneath his all-crushing tracks.

The program arrived just a little too late for review, but here's a screen shot for your delectation . . .





FINNBLAST

The second game from **Thalamus** is almost complete, and like the highly successful *Sanxion* it is being written by Finnish programmer **Stavros Fasoulas**. *Delta* is a full-screen left-to-right horizontally scrolling shoot 'em up which has elements of all the latest arcade games. There are thirty-two weird and wonderful levels to fight your way through, including The Jelly of Dreams, Rocks of Death and Sea of Illusion. **Rob Hubbard** is providing the soundtrack and spot effects.

Cassette users will be pleased to hear that there's an innovative DIY Rob Hubbard loading tune which can be changed and manipulated while the program loads. Coo. Full review next month . . .

TROUBLE IN THE JUNGLE, WHAT?

Palace Software supremo **Pete Stone** explains that the style of their next release, *Stifflip and Co* is '**Binary Vision**-ish' – and takes a similar approach to the one found in *The Fourth Protocol*. "It's basically a spoof English game in the tradition of Ripping Yarns, set in the closing days of the British Empire," he continues, "with lots of humour based on the old stiff upper lip colonial stuff."

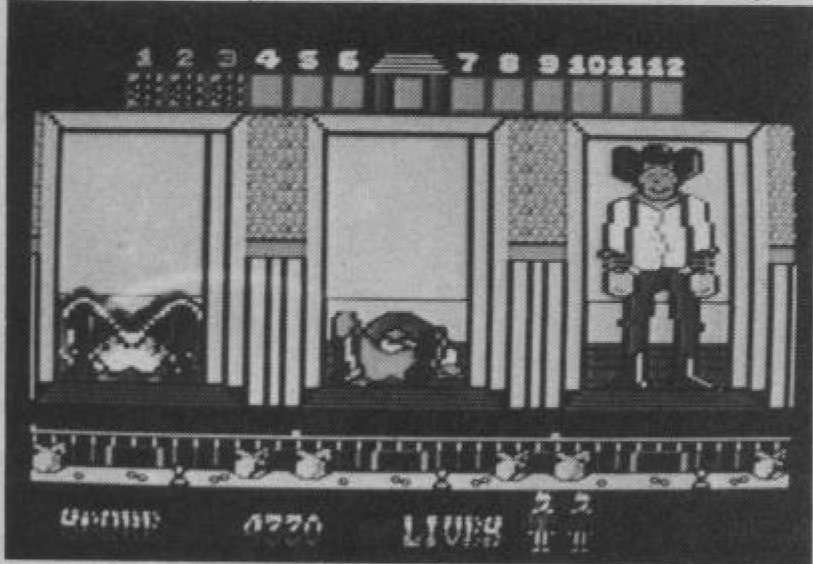
All good public schoolboy humour, it seems. Set in the South American jungles, and featuring all the attendant hazards such as snakepits – the two-part, two-load game contains stereotype 'goodies' and 'baddies'.

Stifflip is icon-driven and the player controls individual members of a party of four explorers on an overall quest to defeat evil and collect rewards. The other characters in the scenario go about their business independently of the player's efforts. It's due for release around March – so keep your peepers peeled!

FIST II FOUL UP (Continued from Last Month's Playing Tips)

Somehow, someone, somewhere, made a minor mistake with Alan Smith's *Fist II* **listing printed last month. It seems that line 330 disappeared during transfer – so, if you've already typed in the listing, simply add line 330 and everything will be hunky dory. Just to be on the safe side, here's the complete listing for your delectation . . .**

```
INFINITE ENERGY FOR FIST II
PLUS 'EXPLODING KICK'
5 PRINT CHR$(147) "PLEASE WAIT . . . "
10 LET A=49152
15 FOR T=0 TO 66:READ Z
20 POKE A+T,Z:G=G+Z:NEXT T
25 IF G<>7874 THEN PRINT "ERROR IN DATA
BETWEEN LINES 200-240":END
30 :
40 LET A=65280
45 FOR T=0 TO 37:READ Z
50 POKE A+T,Z:S=S+Z:NEXT T
55 IF S<>8 THEN PRINT "ERROR IN DATA
BETWEEN LINES 250-300":END
60 :
65 LET A=65380
70 FOR T=0 TO 5:READ Z
75 POKE A+T,Z:D=D+Z:NEXT T
80 IF D<>306 THEN PRINT "ERROR IN DATA IN
LINE 310":END
85 :
90 LET A=530
95 FOR T=0 TO 22:READ Z
100 POKE A+T,Z:F=F+Z:NEXT T
105 IF F<>2761 PRINT "ERROR IN DATA BETWEEN
LINES 320-330":END
110 :
120 LET A=344
130 FOR T=0 TO 45:READ Z
140 POKE A+T,Z:H=H+Z:NEXT T
150 IF H<>4631 THEN PRINT "ERROR IN DATA
BETWEEN LINES 340-380":END
155 :
160 PRINT "INSERT AND REWIND FIST TAPE"
170 PRINT "THEN PRESS A KEY"
180 GET K$:IF K$="" THEN 180
190 SYS 49152
195 :
200 DATA 169, 1, 168, 170, 32, 186, 255
205 DATA 169, 0, 32, 189, 255, 32, 213, 255
210 DATA 169, 7, 141, 38, 5, 169, 2, 141, 183, 4, 141,
204, 4, 169, 255
215 DATA 141, 186, 4, 141, 189, 4, 141, 193, 4, 169,
133
220 DATA 141, 182, 4, 141, 203, 4, 162, 101, 142, 188,
4, 202, 142, 192, 4, 169, 0
230 DATA 141, 185, 4, 141, 133, 2
240 DATA 76, 144, 4
250 DATA 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0
260 DATA 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 2
270 DATA 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 2, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0
280 DATA 0, 0, 0, 0, 4
305 :
310 DATA 195, 4, 17, 2, 87, 1
320 DATA 32, 244, 4, 188, 41, 5, 138, 105, 6, 141, 133,
2, 177, 174, 145, 253, 136, 208, 249
330 DATA 120, 76, 180, 4
335 :
340 DATA 32, 167, 2, 169, 96, 141, 98, 194
350 DATA 32, 0, 192, 169, 234, 141, 9, 45, 141, 10, 45,
141, 11, 45
355 :
360 DATA 160, 9, 185, 124, 1, 153, 67, 37, 136, 16,
247, 108, 99, 194
365 :
370 DATA 164, 143, 240, 5, 169, 0, 141, 19, 4, 96
```



GUN CRAZY

A new range of games is on its way from **Gremlin Graphics** – and they all feature a new price: £4.99. First of the bunch is *West Bank*, an annoyingly addictive but simplistic form of shoot 'em up licensed from a Spanish company.

Playing the role of a security guard in a Wild West banking emporium, you have to shoot would-be robbers as they come through doors on the screen. Of course, you mustn't blow away the genuine customers, or put a bullet in the bombs which appear periodically. The game won acclaim when it appeared at 'full price' on the Spectrum and Amstrad – and now looks set to make an impact on the Commodore . . .

EASY AZIMUTH ADJUSTMENTS

A Solihull-based firm by the name of **Load-It** are offering the ultimate in azimuth adjustment equipment to Commodore owners. Their kit features a knurled knob which is mounted on the top surface of the datacorder, linking it with the azimuth adjustment screw on the tape head. If a tape doesn't load, a mere twiddle of the knob could put things right – and a piezo 'beeper' connected to the cassette unit's output allows you to hear when the tape head has been moved to the optimal position. Oooh.

£9.95 buys the DIY kit direct from **Load-It**, or technically shy types can send their datacorder to **Load-It, 35 Stretton Road, Shirley, Solihull, West Midlands B90 2RX** together with £19.95 for upgrade. Telephone 021 745 4970 for further details . . .



NEW BREAKOUTS

Officially licensed from the new Atari arcade game, **Imagine**'s *Arkanoid* looks like the ten year old arcade game *Breakout*, but it has many new features. For instance, your bat can shoot things, catch the ball and grow larger! Hopefully, we will have a full review next month.

A scrolling beat 'em up set in rough part of America is also due from **Imagine** in the form of an arcade conversion of *Renegade* – the action is set on The Street where muggings are rife. Changing scene dramatically, stablemates **Ocean** are also working on *Taipan* – the game of the film that is soon to be released as a follow-up to Shogun. Set on the China seas, *Taipan* involves the player in buying boats, press-ganging crews and getting involved in piracy. A fair bit of strategy is called for if you are to rule the waves . . .

SORRY PEAKSOFT!

For some strange reason, we managed to print an advertisement for **Peaksoft** which included an incorrect price for their heavy-duty power supply. To make matters worse, we used the wrong telephone number! We're ever so sorry.

Both errors have been corrected in this issue, so if you want to get in touch with **Peaksoft**, turn to page 13 for the full details.

SIGMA SEVEN SLIP

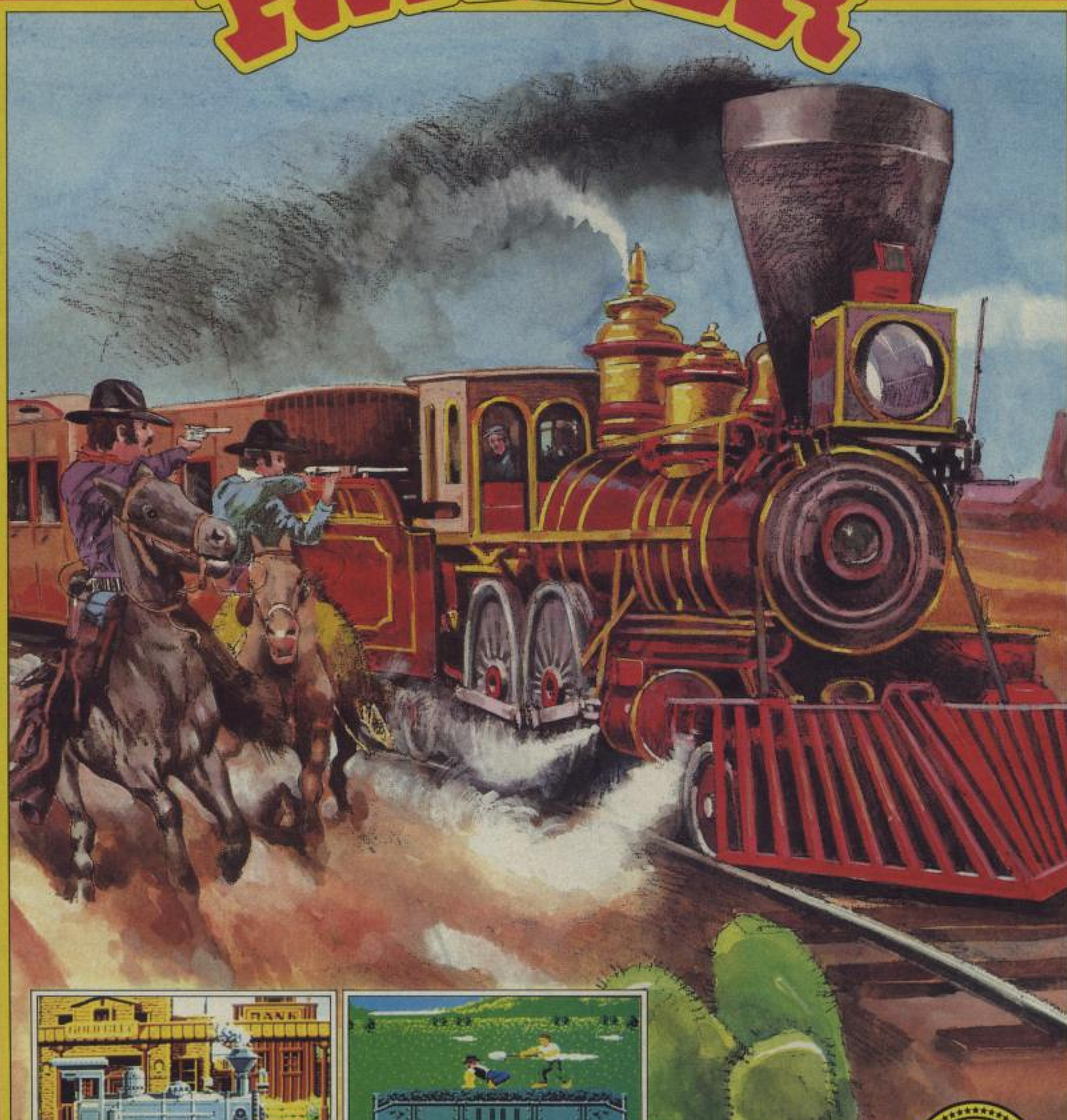
Oops! Last month in the *Sigma Seven* review we quoted the retail price for the disk version of the program as being £14.95. Well, we were wrong – weren't we. 'Tis only £9.95. Sorry!

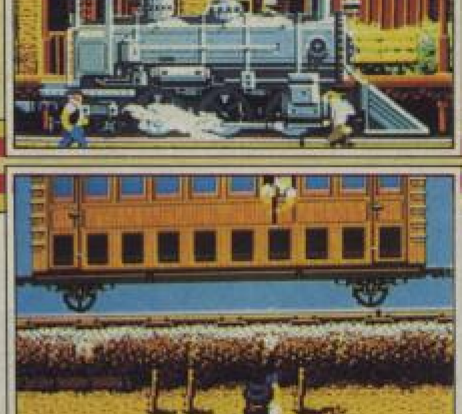
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Part Four

TAMARA KNIGHT – fast-food teleporter salesbeing of the future and all-round nice girl. This is her story. Correction. This is the third portion of her story – as relayed by LOUSE, with pre-condimentisation courtesy of MEL CROUCHER.

THE STORY SO FAR fetched: creation's only perfect (not to mention artistically unclad) human being, Tamara Knight, is seeking a star upon which to wish me, a soft-hearted miniature neutron bomb named LOUSE, into a soft-hearted full sized human being of the male persuasion – preferably with some leisure-ware thrown in. Fortunately, we have just escaped from a hellish place called Heaven in the company of a half-Cherokee former-guitarist from the Ike and Tina Turner Band and two short planks named Pinnochio. Unfortunately, we have landed on the planet Alnilam in O'Ryan's belt, where sectarian conflict is about to erupt between some disgustingly bloated oranges called Bygotts, and the local leprechauns. The worst thing of all is that I am now forced to use the oldest science fiction cliche in the history of pulp. It is my duty to inform you that the leprechauns are little green men. How utterly humiliating!

"Bejabers!" says our leprechaun, flinging his crock of gold at the nearest Bygott. "Pleased to meet you, Mr Bejabers." says Tamara, a very polite, but very unworldly young lady. "Ron for yer loife! If de Bygotts foind out yer a Romulan Catlick, they'll skin yer aloive! And me name's Widdy Coolyew, boi de way, pleased ter meecher." Now I happen to know that pacifism is second nature to Bygotts. The trouble is that their first nature is homicidal mania. We make a run for it, but the Bygotts are everywhere, leering and jeering, panting and ranting "Eat up yer greens!" Tamara emits a perfect yelp, and asks what we should do, to which the leprechaun yells, "Don't ask me darlin', ask de bloody Tinkers." A swarm of leprechauns attacks the huge bulk of the nearest giant orange, renting it asunder – but the sunder would rather be purchased outright. (WARNING: the following bit may be offensive to some vegetarians). Shreds of pith are ripped from the living flesh of the orange warriors. The little green men are sprayed with juice and bombarded with pips. Several are so badly injured that they will remain vegetables for the rest of their lives. Many Bygotts are liquidised before our very eyes, crying "King Bully fer ever". Mashed pulp and splattered chlorophyll ooze underfoot. The leprechaun calling himself Widdy Coolyew is cruelly tossed in oil and vinegar, but he manages to shout to Tamara, "Bring me a handful of dat Bygott pith, quick! If de rest of em can see dere leader's dead, dey moight boggeroff."

This is hopeless. I frantically search my data banks for some useful information to get us out of here, but the only suitable reference I have for this planet is "all knowledge is to be gleaned from the Tinkers." The poor little leprechauns are slaughtered. The rich little leprechauns buy their way out of trouble. The Bygotts gather round us, menacing and semi-peeled. It is quite disgusting. Their focus of attention seems to be Tamara, who is still clutching the fibrous tissues of King Bully of Orange, the Chief Bygott, to her bosom. She is unceremoniously dragged from the battlefield, battered to her knees (they prefer meat in batter) and forced head down over the stump of a dead tree. From the midst of the vengeful mob a sinewy blood orange, stripped to the navel, slowly makes its way toward us. It carries a great sword, glinting and spattered with glutinous green essence of leprechaun.

"If she dies, I die, and so does every other living entity hereabouts. At least I can do something constructive for a change."

The executioner's sword is raised above my poor Tamara's beautiful neck. There is absolutely nothing I can do to save her. In a blinding flash of realisation, bred in the wild and released into captivity, I know that I cannot live without her, and more to the point this story will be somewhat redundant without its heroine. So that's it then: only four poxy episodes before Tamara Knight, intergalactic sales-being for the Macdonalds Teleporter Corporation, and the only perfect human being in existence since the mythological robot-goddess Annbrownsmirrah, is about to die. There is only one ludicrously melodramatic thing left for me to do. I will fulfil my destiny. At the moment when this terrible sword decapitates Tamara, and severs her guiltless head from her blameless body, I will detonate myself, and reduce this entire saga to radioactive dust. If she dies, I die, and so does every other living entity hereabouts. At least I can do something constructive for a change.

"Goodbye Louse" says Tamara, in a small, calm, perfect voice. What's good about it!? Death can often be fatal! I hurriedly re-combine my molecules and cease to be a dirty dog tooth in her perfect mouth. It just wouldn't be right for her to die with such a blemish in her chops. Instead, with her perfect saliva still clinging to my unworthy carapace, I transform myself into a little tea-brown birth mark, or should I say ironic death-mark, the back of her neck, just where these miniature black hairs of her nape meets the fluffy down of her spine, just where the sword is aimed for, just as the last terrible command is given and a voice screams the order, "CUT!" Goodbye Tamara, I loved you as much as it is possible for a neutron bomb to love the spirit and flesh of a small but perfectly formed innocent, whose age and IQ both register as sixteen, goodbye, goodbye, goodbye . . . "

"Who IS that girl with the chopper over her head, as the actwess said to the bar steward. She's not in the scwipt . . . "

I prime my detonator, squeeze my trigger, kiss her neck and hear the prissy voice screeching a string of hysterical orders, "Cut! Cut! Cut! Who IS that girl with the chopper over her head, as the actwess said to the bar steward. She's not in the scwipt, is she? We'll have to shoot this WHOLE scene again! Somebody pour me a dwink of milkywilks in a dirty glass, and put some clothes on that stupid girl's extwemities. You there! yes YOU, the little wooden puppet and the half-cherokee guitarist fwom the Ike and Tina Turner Band, scwape up those corpses pwonto, and get the pwops department to bwing me a fwesh batch of those fat orange thingies and lepwechauns to kill. Oh cwipes! What a WOTTEN day; thwee million cwocks of gold over-budget, some girlie wandewing onto the set, a pile of wotting native fleshypoos, and worst of all I've just broken my fingernail!"

Who is this sweaty idiot, dressed up in a safari suit with a silk cravat wilting beneath his chubby pink jowls? Well, whoever he is, Tamara has been saved! My beautiful hostess will live to fight another day! (or in our case, another five minutes). The impedimented idiot seems to be beckoning for Tamara to join him where he sits on a folding canvas chair with 'Sir Dickie Asteroid, Designer-Conflict Direc-

tor' stitched on the back sequins. I scan my memory banks to remove the negative from this nonsense:

Designer Conflict: in certain sectors of the Galaxy, especially Taurus Excrementus and O'Ryan's Belt, randomised warfare is considered much too dangerous to be left in the hands of politicians, industrialists, the military and the church. In these regions, all conflicts are handled by advertising and marketing agencies. Warring factions are endorsed by competing sportswear companies, package holiday operators, breakfast-food producers, sanitary-ware manufacturers, arms dealers and washing powder corporations, and all proceedings are holovised. The winner of any Designer Conflict is declared as a result of public opinion polls, registered by the operation of the remote-control handset of domestic holovision sets. (NB: certain Designer Conflicts are sponsored by popular game shows, wherein the lucky contestants are able to commit genocide if they can answer a few simple questions – and all on live breakfast holovision).

So that's it . . . the old Vietnam scam! And I am not in the slightest bit surprised to discover that Sir Dickie Asteroid is under contract to none other than Macdonalds' biggest rivals in the whole wide universe, the dreaded Cocacolanisation Corps! They'll grind my Tamara up for lavatory paper if they discover that she is working for the dirty Macs! But before I can warn her, the loathsome Dickie peers at Tamara's bundle of Bygott skins and demands, "What's this load of wubbish, you wuddy wenegade?" Tamara smiles as sweetly as anyone can smile who has just escaped decapitation, bats her eyelids, licks the perfect sweat from her perfect upper lip and answers, "I was just taking the pith to Widdy Coolyew . . ."

"Stunt man, you see this wicked wude wench?' 'Yes, Sir?' 'Well wuddywell STUNT HER!"

"WHAAA?!" screams the offended bladder, "How DARE you widicule me! How DARE you mock my little affliction! You wotter!" Tamara seems puzzled, "What a . . . ?" "You're doing it again you little WOTTER!" "What a what?" "You wotten wuddy wotten wotter!!" Sir Dickie has turned a very fetching shade of purple and puce, and it fetches his entire film crew back onto the battlefield. "Where's my stunt man?!" he bawls. "Here, Sir" snarls the stunt man who resembles a cross between a fork lift truck and another fork lift truck. "Stunt man, you see this wicked wude wench?" "Yes, sir?" "Well wuddywell STUNT HER!"

The moron picks up the execution-sword, swings it at Tamara's terrified body, misses and neatly amputates Sir Dickie Asteroid's left buttock. Your heroine and her companions tiptoe away, leaving the Designer Conflict Director complaining about the stains on his freshly laundered trousers. I nuzzle into the nape of her neck, happy again, and advise her to search for the mysterious Tinkers that little Widdy Coolyew was blathering on about, and whom my data banks endow with so much power. If a Tinker really exists, he might be able to tell us how to wish upon a star. Then we cold stop having these ridiculous adventures, Tamara could visit the toilet and have a bite to eat, and I could be transformed into a soft-hearted full sized human being of the male persuasion, preferably with some leisure-ware thrown in.

It is Pinnochio, riding on the shoulders of Jimminy Cricket aka Jimi Hendrix who moves the plot along not a little. He rubs his forehead in amazement, hurriedly extinguishes the small boy scout fire that spontaneously ignites there, and points to a battered wooden signpost leaning like a crossroad drunk, upon which is carved TO THE TINKERS "Gosh!" says Tamara, "What can it mean?" We all ignore her perfect stupidity, and make our way along an overgrown, twisting pathway, following the sign. We carefully avoid the minefields, quicksand, trip wires, budget software, the snake pits, piranha lakes, bonnie langford videos, the rat traps, tiger traps, von trapps, and fall headlong into the first man/woman/wooden-puppet trap in our path.

We are falling, kicking and screaming into the stinking void. (Well what did you expect? A restroom to materialise, complete with waitress service and extensive whine list?) As we land, a rest-room materialises, complete with a leprechaun waitress proffering an extensive whine list. My sweet Tamara is overjoyed, but not in the slightest bit surprised, and as we have not eaten for the last three planets, she asks what food is to be had. "Sure dere's no bleedin' meat, but we got plenty of oranges." Tamara lets Pinnochio order for her, and excuses herself for a visit to the toilet. I suppose I too will have to get used to these little human weaknesses after we discover a star upon which to wish me.

When we return from my Hostess' ablutions, Jimi Hendrix and Pinnochio have disappeared. Maybe puppets have to go and have a sawdust or something. "We got some meat now, miss," says the miniature waitress, "noice and fresh if yer don't moind de bits of wood in it." For some reason that I cannot quite explain, a shadow of doubt flits across my printed circuit boards, but no matter. Let's see the whine list. "Can I have some whine, please," Tamara requests. "Sure and whoi not. Yer allowed one whine. Just moan it at der Tinker." Tamara spins around looking for this mythical fount of all knowledge, but fails to spot anyone except the waitress, and a pile of clothing remarkably similar to those worn by Jimi Hendrix and Pinnochio.

I scan the room with my sensors, but there are no other life forms here. "Um, excuse me," says Tamara, "exactly where is this Tinker, and can you tell me where my friends have gone, please?" "Sure yer companions are turnin in dere gravy, and de Tinker is on de table in front of yer. Now if yewl scuse me oi'm bein written out of de plot, cos oi was only included as a sinister female for a bit of sexual equality . . ." and with these obscure words, the leprechaun waitress disappears with a slight odour of chip fat. "Where's the Tinker, Louse? I can't see anything on this table except the whine list." And the whine list says, "Den by a process of logical deduction, I must be de Tinker!"

Well, here's a turn up for the book. The greatest intellect in the entire star system of O'Ryan's Belt is a talking sheet of badly printed A4 paper half blotted out by snail trails from the planet Tippex. "Oi do not talk sheet", says the whine list, mis-reading my mind. Tamara wrinkles her nose, and gathers her thoughts. Not an easy task for her to achieve simultaneously. "Um, hello? Hello? can you tell me why . . ." "STOP!!" I instruct Tamara, before she destroys our only chance of finding the wishing star. "You are only allowed one request, which the Tinker must grant. PLEASE don't waste it Tamara. Think very carefully before you speak." She smiles at the whine list, runs a perfect finger over it and says, "But why do they call you the Tinker?"

"I'll always be a neutron bomb, never a man. What a life!"

Ho hum. So that's it then, our only chance of salvation gone, and I've just realised what those ketchup stains on the tablecloth really are. Poor Jimi. Ah well, nearly at the end of this episode, let's hear what the Tinker has to say and just sit around waiting for the usual crummy crisis. Who cares, I'll always be a neutron bomb, never be a man. What a life! "Dey call me de Tinker." says the Tinker, "because I tink. Therefore I am." You know, sometimes I feel like detonating just for the hell of it. Tamara is sill trying to work out the quotation from the Irish philosopher Des Carthy, when the Tinker pipes up, "Well hurry up den, yer allowed one question each, so let's hearin' from de sentient birth mark on de back of yer neck!" I cannot believe my inputs! It means me! We are saved! Oh bliss! Oh joy! Oh get on with the narrative. I tune one of my outputs to the Tinker's frequency, and ask the vital question, clearly and precisely, "Show us how to get to wish upon a star where all our dreams come true."

The tinker tinks, er, thinks, draws itself up to its full height of 297mm and delivers the answer, the solution to my future happiness with Tamara Knight. "Sure yer eejit, it's not a star yer after. Where you want to be is de planet Astar. Dat's where all yer dreams come true. Youse take the M42 out of Alnilam, keep going, past Castor and Pollux, then . . . ah to hell wid it, Oi'll take yer there meself. Oi bought dis great teleporter booth from a Macdonalds sales rep last Tuesday, and Oi've bin dyin ter troi it out".

Little does the Tinker know that dying is exactly what happens every time a Macdonalds Teleporter sends a copy of its passengers off, and drops the originals through the floor to be made into hamburgers. But who cares about that. Unbelievable happiness and fulfilment is about to be mine, when I am wished into human form as Tamara's consort. She giggles with undiluted pleasure bracing her limbs against the walls of the Tinker's teleporter, to avoid hamburgerhood. We are instantly transported to the planet Astar, and just as instantly left there by the Tinker, who has forgotten to turn the oven off. And good riddance, say I, there's only room for one synthetic superintelligence in this story, and that's me.

And what a beautiful place this is! Much quieter than the idiotic battlefields of Alnilam, much prettier than the hell-on-earth of Heaven, much less pretentious than the high-tech of Amnesia and nowhere near as smelly as Pynkfloid. Astar will become our private Paradise, our very own Barrat podule. "Well, Tamara, what do you think of it so far?" I ask, readying myself for manhood, and trying to decide whether or not to have a small moustache. Tamara hesitates, "I . . . I'm not sure Louse. I've got a funny feeling we should be very careful what we say around here. It feels like the whole planet is listening . . ." "Ha ha!" I cry, "you don't say! You must be kidding . . . you . . ." Whoops, I seem to have been somewhat preoccupied with my future moustache, and my words have had a rather drastic result. No sooner have I spoken, than Tamara's mouth disappears, and she gives birth to two tiny goats. Well hush my mou . . . hngk?

To be continued . . .



THE 1986 ZZAP! READERS' AWARDS

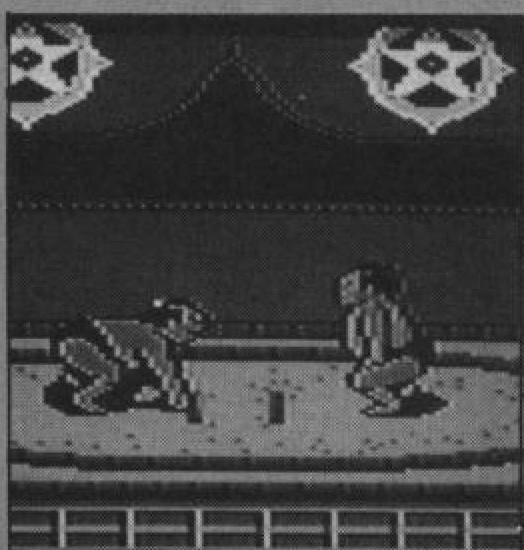
Readers' Awards

THE DEFINITIVE AWARDS FOR THE BEST SOFTWARE OF 1986!

Well, you filled out the forms and sent them to us (the Competition Minion spent hours opening them all) – and now, after many late nights of collating over a hot (and somewhat sweaty) keyboard, we are proud to present . . . THE RESULTS!!

BEST GAME OVERALL

WORLD GAMES
Epyx/US Gold



LEADER BOARD
Access/US Gold
THE SENTINEL
Firebird
GHOSTS 'N' GOBLINS
Elite
MERCENARY
Novagen

It looks as though 1986 was the year of the sports simulation . . . Epyx's latest and greatest *World Games* clinched this prestigious category with 14.5% of the votes – although hot on its heels was Bruce and Roger Carver's golf simulation *Leader Board* with 13.5%. Jeff Crammond's unique strategy game *The Sentinel* collected 8.5% of the votes, and Chris Butler's arcade conversion *Ghosts 'n' Goblins* notched up a credible 8%. Paul Woakes' *Mercenary* scraped fifth place with 5%.

BEST PLATFORM GAME

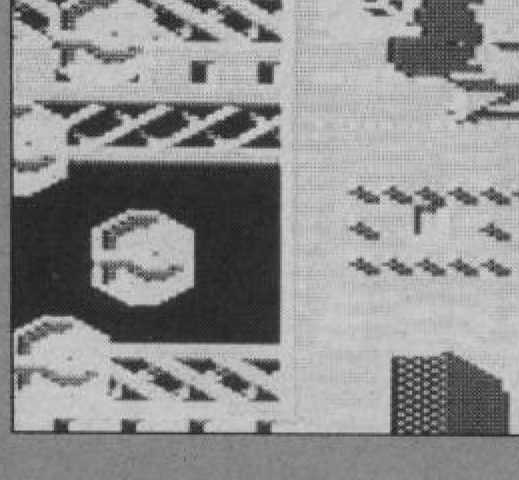
GHOSTS 'N' GOBLINS
Elite

BOUNDER
Gremlin Graphics
CAULDRON II
Palace Software
HERCULES
Alpha Omega
THE SACRED ARMOUR OF ANTI-RIAD
Palace Software

It was a hard-fought battle, but *Ghosts 'n' Goblins* managed to hold off *Bounder* by 12.5% to 11.5%. Palace collected 8% of the votes with *Cauldron II*, and 5.5% with *Antiriad* – split by Alpha Omega's visually and aurally obscene, but highly playable *Hercules* which claimed 7%.

BEST SHOOT 'EM UP

URIDIUM
Hewson



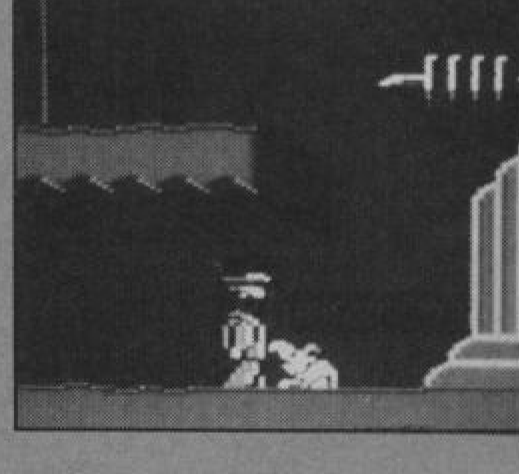
Andrew Braybrook: "It's nice to know that *Uridium* was remembered, even though it was released at the beginning of last year. I'm too modest to say anything like 'I deserve it' – but I suppose it puts all the 'clones' in their place. Thank you – I'm very pleased."

SANXION
Thalamus
IRIDIS ALPHA
Llamasoft/Hewson
GREEN BERET
Ocean
SPACE HARRIER
Elite

Not surprisingly, perhaps, *Uridium* came out on top here, collecting a highly commendable 34% of the votes. *Sanxion* settled for second place with 23%, and *Iridis Alpha* earned Jeff Minter the 'bronze' with 6.5%. Imagine's competent conversion of the arcade game *Green Beret* attracted 4.5%, and Chris Butler's conversion of *Space Harrier* crept in with 3.5%.

BEST ARCADE ADVENTURE

DAN DARE
Virgin



Andy Wilson, programmer behind *Dan Dare***):** "I'm extremely pleased – thank you. If there had been an award last year for the best unfinished game, I'm sure *Dan Dare* would have won that as well."

THE SACRED ARMOUR OF ANTI-RIAD
Palace Software

Stanley Schembri, programmer of *Anti-riad***):** "On behalf of all at Palace Software – thanks very much. It's a reflection of all the hard work that went into it."

GAUNTLET
US Gold
MERCENARY
Novagen
STARQUAKE
Bubble Bus

Dan Dare claimed 12.5% of the votes and a clear victory over *Antiriad* which received 9.5%. US Gold's conversion of *Gauntlet* attained 6.5%, narrowly beating Novagen's *Mercenary* with 6%, and Steve Crow's *Star-quake* with 5.5%.

BEST ADVENTURE

THE PAWN
Magnetic Scrolls/Rainbird

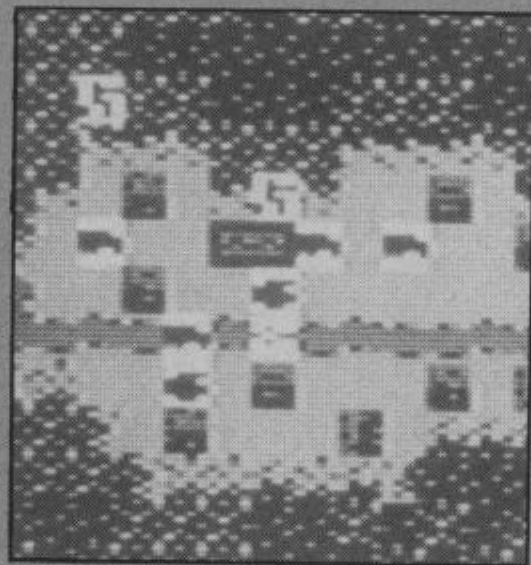


THE PRICE OF MAGIK
Level 9
THE LEATHER GODDESSES OF PHOBOS
Infocom
LORD OF THE RINGS
Melbourne House
BORROWED TIME
Activision

Magnetic Scrolls' disk-only text-with-graphics adventure collected a staggering 43.5% of the votes, leaving Level 9 hanging on to second place with a comparatively pal-try 4.5%. Infocom's raunchy tongue-in-cheek romp *The Leather Goddesses of Phobos*, scraped third place with 4%, while Melbourne House's *Lord of the Rings* and Interplay's disk-only *Borrowed Time* had to be content with 3.5% and 2% respectively.

BEST STRATEGY GAME

VIETNAM
SSI/US Gold



THE SENTINEL
Firebird
GERMANY 1985
SSI/US Gold
SILENT SERVICE
Microprose/US Gold
ZOIDS
Martech

The controversial nature of SSI's wargame *Vietnam* proved the most popular in this cat-egory, gaining a commendable 17% of the votes. The unique qualities of *The Sentinel* appealed to 11%, while the grim nuclear over-tones of *Germany 1985* earned it 5%. Micro-prose's submarine simulation *Silent Service*, made a surprise appearance with 4.5%, leav-ing the Electronic Pencil Company's *Zoids* marginally behind with 4%.

BEST SIMULATION

LEADER BOARD
Access/US Gold



WORLD GAMES
Epyx/US Gold
ACE OF ACES
Accolade/US Gold
SUPER CYCLE
Epyx/US Gold
SUPER HUEY II
Cosmi/US Gold

Surprisingly, US Gold dominated this categ-ory. The leisurely pace of Bruce and Roger Carver's golf simulation appealed most, with *Leader Board* claiming 21% of the votes – leaving *World Games* to take the silver with 13%. *Ace of Aces* managed a respectable third with 11%, while *Super Cycle* and *Super Huey II* took fourth and fifth place with 7.5% and 7% respectively – only just ahead of Microprose's *Silent Service* and *Solo Flight Plus*.

BEST GRAPHICS

WORLD GAMES
Epyx/US Gold

THE PAWN
Rainbird
URIDIUM
Hewson
THE SACRED ARMOUR OF ANTI-RIAD
Palace Software
SANXION
Thalamus

World Games claimed a convincing victory in this category with an astounding 31.5% of the votes! Bob Stevenson's splendid stills earned *The Pawn* a credible 9% for second place, while Andrew Braybrook's slick bas-relief graphics in *Uridium* gained 8%. Dan Malone's stunning sprites and backdrops earned 7% for *Antiriad*, and *Sanxion* scraped fifth place with 4.5%

BEST MUSIC

SANXION
Thalamus



Rob Hubbard: "Great news tha' . . . really nice. It's a great honour to be so popular with the ZZAP! readers. I shall endeavour to keep up the good work throughout 1987."

KNUCKLEBUSTERS
Melbourne House
(Rob Hubbard)
PARALLAX
Ocean
(Martin Galway)
GREEN BERET
Ocean
(Martin Galway)
GHOSTS 'N' GOBLINS
Elite
(Mark Cooksey)

1986 was undoubtedly a good year for Rob Hubbard. *Sanxion* collected 17% – twice as many votes as *Knucklebusters*, which clinched second place with 8.5%. Breathing down its neck though with 8%, was Martin Galway's *Parallax* soundtrack, followed by *Green Beret* with 5.5%. Mark Cooksey did well to come fifth with 5% for his *Ghosts 'n' Goblins* tunes, which just managed to hold off competition from *International Karate* and *Miami Vice*.

BEST SOUND FX

WORLD GAMES
Epyx/US Gold

INTERNATIONAL KARATE
System 3
LEADER BOARD
Access/US Gold
SANXION
Thalamus
IRIDIS ALPHA
Llamasoft/Hewson

World Games collected a comfortable first place with 14%, while the digitised grunts and groans of *International Karate* attracted 9% of the votes – just ahead of *Leader Board* with 8.5%, and *Sanxion* with 8%. *Iridis Alpha* impressed 3.5%, putting it firmly in fifth place.

BEST PROGRAMMER

ANDREW BRAYBROOK



"That's nice – it shows I must be doing something right. I think these awards mean more than anything – it's votes from people who actually buy the games. Thanks to everyone who voted for me. I shall try to – no, I *will* keep up the good work."

CHRIS BUTLER
JEFF MINTER
ROB HUBBARD
STAVROS FASOULAS

There was no stopping the votes for Andrew Braybrook, who claimed a clear-cut victory with an astounding 41% – nearly twice as many votes as Chris Butler in second place with 23%. Jeff Minter received 6.5%, and, strange as it may seem, Rob Hubbard collected 4% and fourth place, forcing newcomer Stavros Fasoulas into a submissive fifth position with 3.5%.

BEST SOFTWARE HOUSE

US GOLD

"We are always honoured to receive prestigious awards, particularly when they are the results of a consumer poll. We are therefore delighted to have received such an overwhelming recognition from ZZAP! readers of our products' quality and appeal to Commodore owners. So, to our friends – the readers of ZZAP! – thank you for not only buying our games but taking the trouble to vote in this poll, helping us to consolidate our position as the undisputed software champions of Europe for a third successive year. We promise you that the products in development currently in the US are something else – prepare to be left breathless!"

ELITE

Steve Wilcox, Joint Director of Elite: "It's not got a great deal to do with me – so I'd like to say congratulations and thanks to the programmers involved, and thanks to ZZAP! readers for voting in the way that they did. We recognise that our 64 conversions are perhaps the weakest amongst those we publish, so we intend to improve the standard of products over 1987."

EPYX
HEWSON
OCEAN

A substantial win for US Gold with 39.5% of the total votes – virtually three times as many votes as Elite, who just managed to top a stand-alone Epyx by 14% to 13%. A 'Consultants-less' Hewson received 10.5%, and Ocean had to settle for fifth place with 3.5%.

BEST ADVERTISEMENT

WORLD GAMES
US Gold

GAUNTLET
US Gold
SANXION
Thalamus
SKY RUNNER
Cascade
FIRELORD
Hewson

An almost exhausted *World Games* beat off fierce competition to win, quite convincingly, with 10%. *Gauntlet* followed with a credible 7%, leaving *Sanxion* trailing with 5%, *Sky Runner* with 4%, and last but not least, *Firelord* with 3.5%.

LEAST PLEASING GAME

KNIGHT RIDER
Ocean

FIST II
Melbourne House

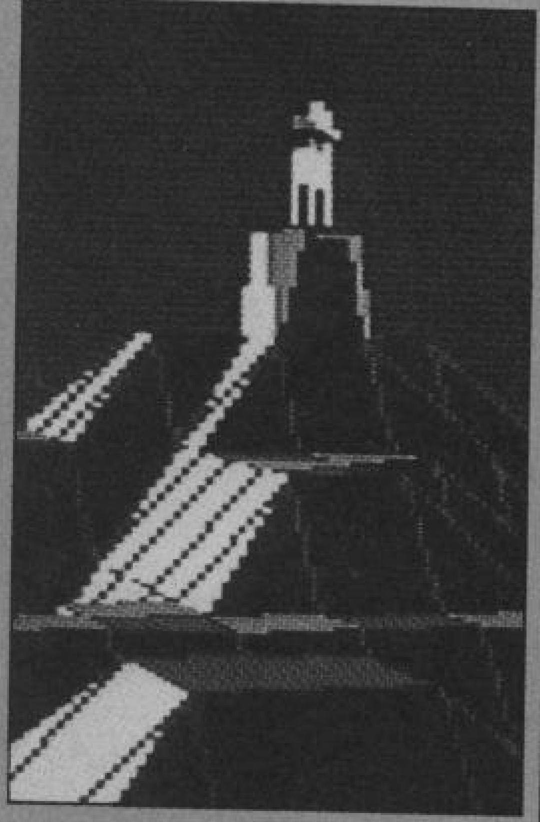
Jane Denning, Marketing Manager for Melbourne House: 'No comment.'

WORLD CUP CARNIVAL
US Gold
ROBOBOLT
Alpha Omega
BREAKTHRU
US Gold

This was also a hard fought category, but eventually *Knight Rider* came out on top with 10% of the votes – closely followed (quite surprisingly) by *Fist II* with 8%. Artic – er, US Gold's *World Cup Carnival* notched up 6.5% and third place, while Alpha Omega's budget disaster *Robobolt* collected 5% – 2% more than its ZZAP! review. US Gold's arcade conversion of *Breakthru* settled into fifth place with 4%

STATE OF THE ART AWARD

THE SENTINEL
Firebird



Herbie Wright, Group Publisher for Firebird Gold and Beyond: "A big thank you to all ZZAP! readers – in these days of clones (and clones of clones) it's great to know that originality still counts. We're really proud of *The Sentinel*, and Geoff Crammond the guy who designed and programmed it."

WORLD GAMES
Epyx/US Gold
LEADER BOARD
Access/US Gold
ALTER EGO
Activision
MERCENARY
Novagen

There seemed little doubt about this result – *The Sentinel* received 23% of the total votes, making it a clear winner. *World Games* came in a comfortable second with 16%, and *Leader Board* just managed third with 8%, and *Alter Ego* wasn't far behind with 7%. Despite being released at the very beginning of last year, Paul Woakes' *Mercenary* earned a respectable fifth with 5.5%

So there we have it – the ZZAP! Readers Awards for 1986. Thanks to everyone who took the trouble to vote, and congratulations to all the programmers and software houses who received awards – your trophies will be despatched shortly.

Well, that's another year in the bag – and another ten forms out of it! The following lucky voters each win £20 worth of software and a ZZAP! T-Shirt . . .

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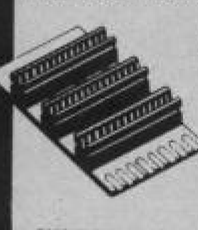
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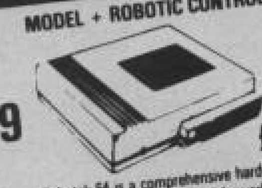
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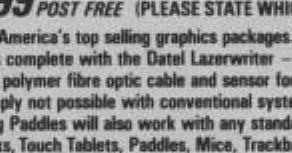
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MENTAL PROCREATION

By Andrew Braybrook

Joyous news! Once again Andrew Braybrook's imagination is 'up the junction' . . . (pregnant pause) . . . Yes, there's another binary bun in the oven – and over the following months you will be able to witness, first hand, the agonies and the ecstasies Andrew experiences . . . From conception, through gestation, to the labours of birth. In this heart-rending first installment, Andrew ignores his maternal cravings for lumps of code and gets to grips with ante-natal depression . . .

Thursday 4th December
I've finally tidied up the loose ends on *Uridium Plus*, and the American version of *AlleyKat* and *Uridium*. This took a while because I've been installing the new anti-cartridge system. Since most of these devices are used primarily for piracy I feel that it is necessary to spend this time, although I'd rather not have to. Such cartridges have no place in the grand scheme of things – if you want the disk version then buy the disk version. If your tape breaks, send it back for replacement. If you wear it out, buy a new one. It's the same with records.

None of this would be necessary if these cartridges were individually numbered, like certain modems, and had to be in place to reload backups. I suppose manufacturers don't do this because people wouldn't spend £35-50 on a backup device that couldn't make that money back somehow. I wonder just how many people have spent that much on replacement originals. Anyway, I hope that I don't have to spend too long protecting the new game, as it's just an annoying waste of my time.

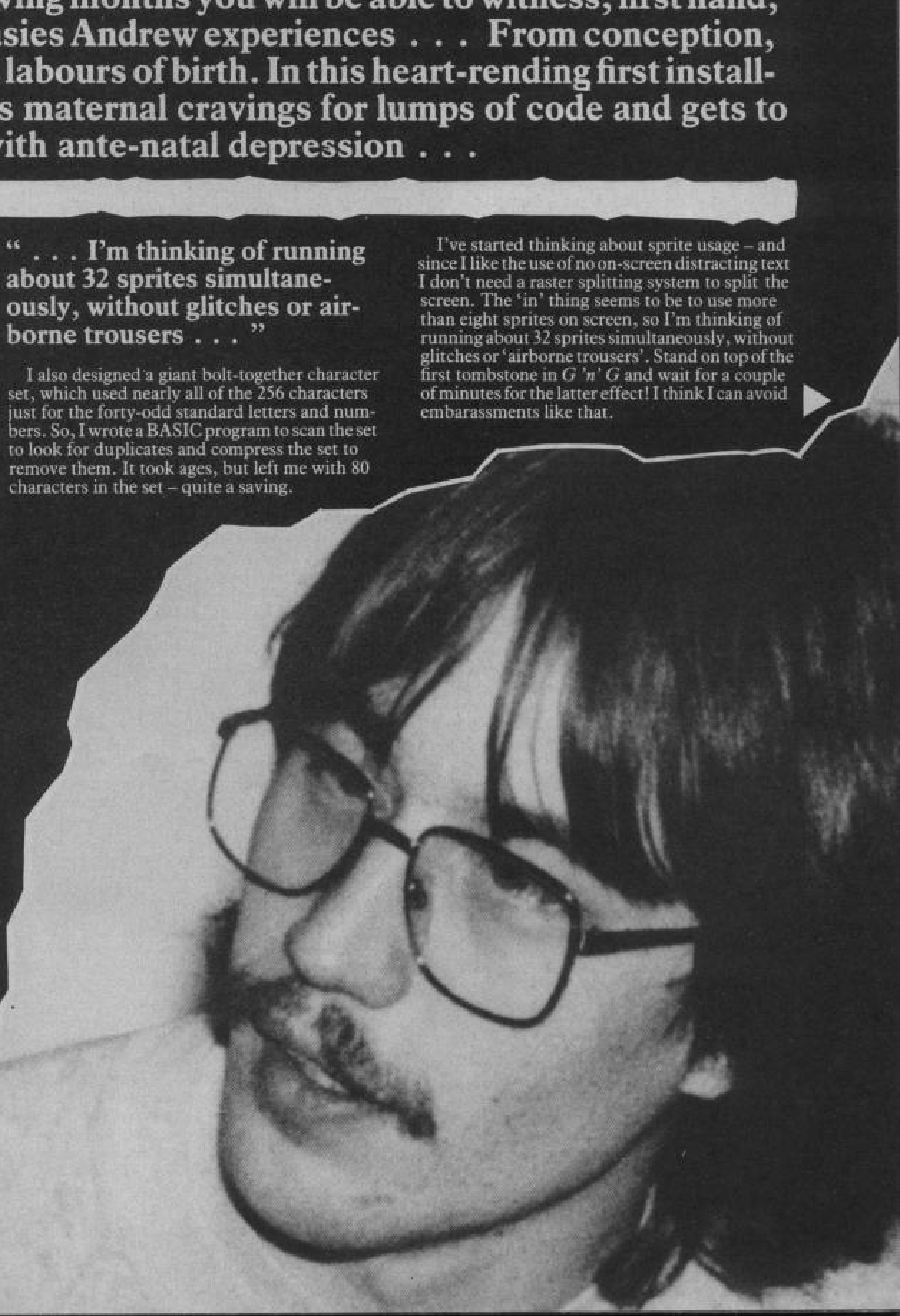
ST (Steve Turner – the boss) today ordered two PC compatibles for us to write the code on. This mean we can write assembler on these big beasts with lots of speed and memory, then down-load the machine code via RS-232 to the C128. Delivery should be in mid-January.

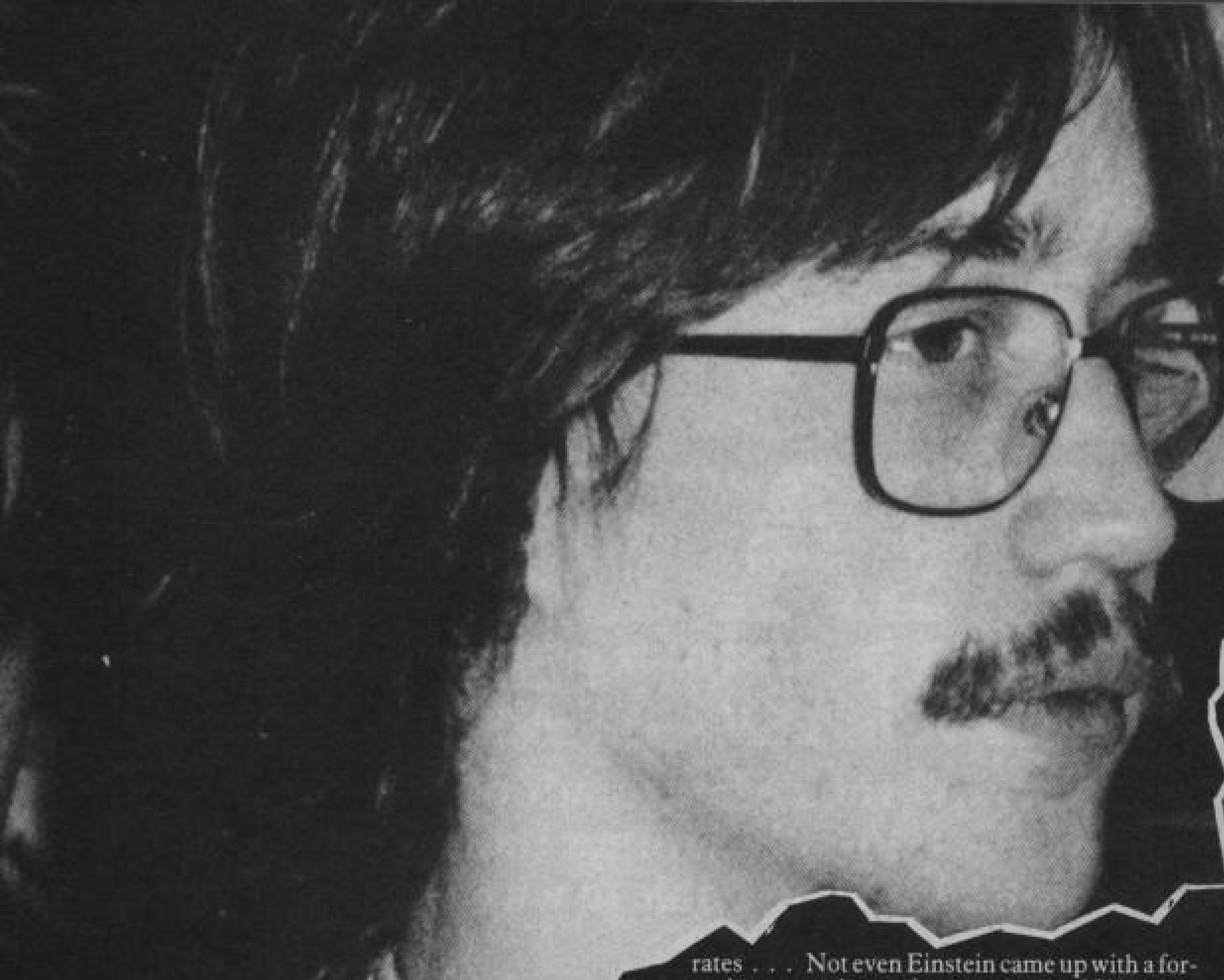
Meantime, I have been thinking about the new game design and have been drawing a new character set. I have so far decided on only a few elements that I wish to incorporate, any or all of which may be discarded at any time. This time I definitely don't want to scroll the screen. I know I said that before *AlleyKat*, but this time I think I've cracked it. I can still simulate scrolling with a three-layered, any-direction moving star-field. I've already designed about twenty characters that bolt together to produce a new style of metallic spaceship, different from *Uridium*, inspired more by Atari-esque graphics as in the *AlleyKat* title screens.

" . . . I'm thinking of running about 32 sprites simultaneously, without glitches or airborne trousers . . . "

I also designed a giant bolt-together character set, which used nearly all of the 256 characters just for the forty-odd standard letters and numbers. So, I wrote a BASIC program to scan the set to look for duplicates and compress the set to remove them. It took ages, but left me with 80 characters in the set – quite a saving.

I've started thinking about sprite usage – and since I like the use of no on-screen distracting text I don't need a raster splitting system to split the screen. The 'in' thing seems to be to use more than eight sprites on screen, so I'm thinking of running about 32 sprites simultaneously, without glitches or 'airborne trousers'. Stand on top of the first tombstone in *G 'n' G* and wait for a couple of minutes for the latter effect! I think I can avoid embarassments like that.





Friday 5th December
Got to grips with the thirty-two sprite system. It has to reassign sprites to new objects after it has finished displaying the old object. This requires some fancy raster splitting. Such problems as 'What if two sprites need assigning at the same time?', or 'What happens if more than eight sprites need displaying on the same line?', or 'What happens if I move an object while it's displaying it?', or 'What about different sprite colours and display modes?' all spring to mind.

I've spent most of the day writing this on paper, refining it on paper, realising it won't work, redesigning it and mentally testing it. I think I've now got a Mk 1 system that is adequate for testing the theory. Unfortunately I need quite a hefty system in the C128 just to test these three pages of code. Things like a character set, monitor, and text routines are all required right at the start. With the new large letters I need to rewrite my character and text handling routines. I also need a test-bed to get the screen in the right place and mode, preserve the monitor's variables, fire up the interrupts, return to the monitor when required and display diagnostics. This is all before I get to even do any actual game processing! I'd better start thinking of a game name too, as it's very important to get the right name, create a good atmosphere and get things moving in the right direction. After all, it's very difficult designing a title screen when you don't know what to put on it!

Monday 8th December
Spent some of the morning trying to decipher the RS-232 section in the Programmers Reference Guide. All the decent baud rates are marked NI

"Not even Einstein came up with a formula as complex as the one on page 350!"

which we believe is Not Implemented. Thanks, Commodore. I'm not waiting four minutes for any program to arrive from twelve inches away at the PC, so we investigated the user baud rates . . . Not even Einstein came up with a formula as complex as the one on page 350!

It transpires that the rate in the calculation is in machine cycles per bit – very standard, I don't think. Why didn't it say so?

Keyed in my character set data for my new giant characters in a (hopefully) compressed form. I then updated my utility routine library. At this point I have to start deciding on the overall memory layout of the C64 – where do I put the code? Where does the screen go?

Having decided on a multiple sprite system, most sprite handling routines that I have used before are now redundant. As long as I can use my new system for all my sprite requirements I shall be alright.

Tuesday 9th December
Read up a bit more on RS-232, including how to get it talking to PC compatibles. Now I'm even more confused. A 25-pin connector, ideal for parallel data transfers at high speed, and how many wires do they actually use? Three! Brilliant!

Keyed in enough code to get a test-bed running just enough to see the screen, colour it, write on it, and return to the monitor. Forgot to unblank the screen. Twice! The giant character set looks great, no mistakes, just ABMON printing two non-existent characters.

In this game I need to print a 'null' character, ie: nothing at all. This is important. In every game I've done so far I needed to do this, but never got round to it. It may seem a waste of time printing nothing, but it is in fact very useful. For example: imagine the line '3 ships left'. When there's only one ship left it looks stupid saying '1 ships left', and I hate '1 ship (s) left' as it's a lazy cop-out. So, you need to be able to eliminate the 's' on the end of 'ships'. You could blank it out with a space, but then it looks untidy because there are two spaces instead of one. So, you need to substitute a null character.

Following so far? Yes, I am very fussy, but I take great pride in my work – not a pixel out of place, nor a line of text uncentred.

Wednesday 10th December
Today's the day – take the plunge and key in the multiple sprite routine. I always write the complicated routines on paper first. This gives me time to think of all the things that might be wrong. Thus, a routine is fairly well debugged by the time I type it in. This does result in a very untidy-looking piece of paper though – keying-in time is a time for final mental debugging.

I fired up the test-bed with no sprites to start with – let's not get too ambitious. The system is running OK, so any crashes now will be caused by the multi-sprite system. I set up some sprite positions in the table and switched on a sprite . . . It appeared. Wonders will never cease! Try two sprites . . . three, four. All working. Let's go for eight . . . Since this is the maximum allowed anyway, all is still working. Now let's try nine . . . The raster splitting system kicks in and reallocates the first sprite further down the screen. It works. Brilliant! How about ten, eleven – fifteen? Let's go mad – twenty-three. It works! All in all a very successful test indeed.

I settled on a maximum of 32 sprites – they make the screen look very busy, any more will take a long time to display and run. Tried a bit of destruction testing. How close can I get the sprites before things go wrong? And what will it do? A ninth sprite can get within three pixels of a row of eight – the worst case. Any closer and it disappears. It took me a while to figure out why, but I accept the reasoning now. Rule two of VIC says: 'I haven't started displaying something from the beginning, so I'm not going to display any of it'. This applies to sprites or characters and really makes partial vertical scrolling difficult (as used in *Paradroid*).

Thursday 11th December
Having the large character set in all its graphic glory (?), I started thinking along the lines of a *Paradroid* style of game – maybe as part of the new game. I decided that I would like to see *Paradroid* in this style, so I diverted my attention to dusting off the old *Paradroid* source files. This turned out to be a lengthy job as I started thinking of all sorts of 'What if . . . 's and did about eight half-hour assemblies. At one point I had *Paradroid* running at 50 game cycles per second (three times faster than normal), the same speed as *Uridium*. It took a while to familiarise myself with the memory layout, as it's rarely the same in two consecutive games.

"My disk drive 'machine-gunned' twice and ruined two consecutive assemblies right at the end. AB is not impressed."

Took *Paradroid* home to work on it. My disk drive 'machine-gunned' twice and ruined two consecutive assemblies right at the end. AB is not impressed. The red light flashes a bit on loading, but it still works. It's getting unreliable though. That's all I need . . .

Friday 12 December
Spent most of the day redrawing the *Paradroid* graphics in the new style. After correcting the colour table, which displayed the most grotesque green selection anyone has seen since the Dragon 32, it gives a new lease of life to the game. It's a pity that it's too late to use it in the Christmas double-pack, but may be just as well – I'll let my new game show the graphical advance. After all, the object of this exercise was only to evaluate the new graphics properly.

Saturday 13th December
Completed work on the new graphics as inserted into *Paradroid*. It looks very neat and proves that the new graphics work, although finding colour schemes that fit is more difficult. They represent a step forwards from the *Paradroid/Uridium* style but retain the shiny metallic look.

Monday 15th and Tuesday 16th December
Went to ZZAP! Towers for the Newsfield Christ-

mas Party. Watched certain notables consuming silly expensive drinks, and generally had a good time. Stavros Fasoulas and I decided that redefinable keys are a pain and tried to find the name of the only Commodore owner without a joystick – which should be easy as he'll be the only one still playing *The Sentinel*.

Wednesday 17th December
Decided to take the multiple sprite system one stage further to get it running more or less as it will in the final game. This requires strobing between two position tables, the interrupts picking up the sprite positions and displaying them from one table, while the main program works out their next position in the other table . . . Well it seems pretty basic to me. Fired it up to be greeted by a blank black screen. No return to monitor is possible. The code all seems intact but the interrupts aren't running anymore. I haven't a clue as to why not – it's not as if I've altered a lot in that department.

Thursday 18th December
Found an error in the sprite assignment system which meant it was trying to update a large-numbered sprite's position. This is more than eight anyway, so some important video chip registers were getting corrupted. This resulted in, amongst other things, a blank screen.

Tried to get it running moving sprites on the screen, but it seems that a routine that puts the objects in the correct sequence ready for sprite assignment isn't doing its job properly – it's doing a *Commando*, ie: the display glitches every couple of seconds and objects disappear. Unlike *Commando* however, this bug *will* be fixed!

Still putting together ideas about running the objects in various tables, I have an object table of 'n' elements, some of which will be given sprites because they are near or on screen. These will go into one or two alternating (or strobing) tables. The active table of these two is then partially copied out into another table for displaying every 50th of a second. The active table then swaps places with its passive sister table for the next 50th of a second. You probably won't be surprised to learn that co-ordinating all of this gives me quite a headache!

I also want to use Polar vectors for the ships, not X-Y vectors for the movement. I think it'll give them more realistic movements. I may use 'bradians', which involves doing nasty things to radians to get 256 degrees in a circle rather than 360. See Gary Liddon for further information on 'bradians'.

Friday 19th December
Updating all these objects seems to take up a large amount of processor time. It seems I've only got time to update about 22 simple moving objects every 50th of a second. I'll have to make the code more efficient to run any more than this.

I did manage to get different coloured squares floating quite merrily around the screen, and it does look very busy. Rearranged a few instructions to stop it from glitching.

Monday 22nd December
Got rid of the last screen glitch and refined the object handler. It can still only manage 24 objects comfortably. I may have to run the objects every 25th of a second. I'll have to experiment.

Scribbled notes on running polar vectors. These are not distant cousins of polar bears but a way of representing movements in terms of an angle and a velocity, rather than an X speed and a Y speed as I've always done before. The latter approach tends to give unnatural diagonal movements. I shall still use X and Y co-ordinates to log positions, but I will have a giant sine table to look up angular movement speeds. Calculating them would be far too slow. Steve Turner wishes it to be noted that he doesn't hold out much hope for this. He only wants to say 'I told you so.' in a couple of months time!

Tuesday 23rd December
Winding down for Christmas. Had the Company Christmas lunch up at Chequers, and very nice it was too. Tried to get the C64 talking to the Spectrum via RS-232, but they weren't listening to each other.

Wednesday 24th December
Mickey Mouse award of the month goes to the inventor of RS-232: the standard that doesn't have a standard. Let's have an expensive 25-pin connector and only use eight of them. Let's use cables with only eight wires to make future expansion impossible. Let's use sockets on some devices and plugs on others so that people need a whole host of different leads. And to cap it all the Spectrum has its own standard four-pin connection! Sparse documentation on the subject gives the impression that no-one really understands it anyway. Anyone know how to connect an Opus PC-II to a C64 via a parallel data link?

"Anyone know how to connect an Opus PC-II to a C64 via a parallel data link?"

Monday 5th January
Over-slept due to being out of the habit of getting up much before mid-day. Had lengthy discussion with ST about how bad RS-232 is (still) then decided to abandon it. Looked up the specifications of Centronics interface and compared these to the specifications of the C64 user port. Looks pretty similar to me – and it's parallel. A whole byte at once! Pretty amazing!

Everything we've read implies that it is possible to connect the two. Why has this idea been kept from us? Why does everyone rave over RS-232 when it just doesn't work?

Revised my sprite sorting ideas after discussion with Paul Hughes and Gary Liddon. I will get 32 sprites running with plenty of time to spare. I'll try a faster sort first, and if that doesn't speed it up enough I'll have to rethink the whole system.

Tuesday 6th January
Battled with the new sort routine some more. Got a couple of BSS errors – the ubiquitous 'Blank Screen and Stop'. Finally sussed out what was causing it, but not necessarily why! It makes a dog's dinner out of sorting the sprites, and causes the them to flicker occasionally. Yeuck. It doesn't half fry the old grey matter when you have lists of pointers pointing to other pointers in the same list, and also to other tables. Reading what I've just written, it now dawns on me what I've been doing wrong. All that sorting by Y co-ordinates is undone by the final extractions routine that unsorts everything back into jumbled up sequence (!). Brilliant!

Wednesday 7th January
Stayed up 'til two o'clock in the morning battling with the sprite sorter. Finally got it to display 32 sprites on screen at once, providing the first one appears last on the screen. Very peculiar. Unfortunately it doesn't leave much raster time to do anything else, such as run the game – in about an inch of raster time on 14" portable!

"No bubbles, no insert sorts, no Shell Metzner (who?), no McPherson Struts . . . no matter – my logical chain sort isn't quite working anyway!"

Got a 'phone call with all the answers at about 11 o'clock this morning. "Why don't you try this . . . " were the pearls of wisdom. Eventually ascertained what was going on, and it doesn't involve a sort routine at all. No bubbles, no insert sorts, no Shell Metzner (who?), no McPherson Struts . . . no matter – my logical chain sort isn't quite working anyway!

Rearranged the program a lot and then rearranged it again after realising that the first method was very silly indeed. It was setting up a new table on top of an old table, which the interrupts were still trying to read! This is what causes what IBM call 'unpredictable results'. Personally, I find the results very predictable – it always goes wrong!

Now I've got my 32 sprites whizzing around the screen looking like an abstract asteroids game, I've got at least four inches of raster time to spare, and I'm very happy. With a bit of optimisation I'll get some more time back and I can start on the moving background system.

Thursday 8th January
Went to Hewson's New Year launch in Picadilly and met some of the Press. Finished the day with a visit to a couple of arcades in London to see what's new on the 'real' machines. There are some great games about with superb graphics like *Slapfight*, *XX Mission*, and *Salamander*. It really makes us weep to see what these machines can do. Saw the new hydraulic-seated driving game with probably the same video chip as *Space Harrier*. This produces a very convincing environment, mostly with giant sprites. The gap between arcade technology and home micro technology is widening.

Friday 9th January
Our new Opus PC compatibles have arrived! ST has one of them working and is trying out some of the software. They're quite large and have a rather loud fan inside for cooling purposes. There's also plenty of reading matter to plough through before we can get working on them. On the game front, I've optimised the sprite code a bit more and it's all running smoothly with no apparent hiccups.

Monday 12th January
Snowed in at home. Luckily I have my working disks at home so I can carry on – but without my notes. Ah well.

To speed things up even more I had a quiet think about sprites. My current system sets position, colour, sprite image and mode in either hi-res or multi-colour. I realised that any one sprite image will always be in the same mode, and usually the same colour. Thus, it is necessary for the object mover to worry about colour and mode – the display routine can just pick these up from a table. I can update this table if an object needs to change colour.

Tuesday 13th January
Still snowed in. I still haven't drawn any sprites that I need – I'm not even sure *what* I need! I want to steer clear of space-ships and robots as these have been used to death on the 64 over this last year.

Had a lengthy session on the sprite editor, just doodling. I know what I want but I can't really draw it. The editor doesn't quite reflect what my game needs, ie: a different colour for each sprite, which makes it's difficult to check animation.

Wednesday 14th January
Been thinking about the background. Again, I know what I want, but I have to think of a different and plausible scenario. As this type of display hasn't been used before, to my knowledge, I don't even know if the game design will work! If I go ahead it could be two or three months before I know for sure either way! This requires more thought, and perhaps some discussion.

Thursday 15th January
Had the brilliant idea of using a bit-map screen to get more colour out of the machine – three independent colours per 4 x 8 pixel square. This is appealing, but it costs 9K in the 16K video bank. That leaves 7K for sprites, or 112 images. In character mode it would only use 3K, leaving 13K for sprites – or 208 images. Do I really need the extra colours? Looks like I'll have to live without them.

ST phoned in a jubilant mood in the evening to say that the Spectrum and C64 are now chatting to each other – both ways, in parallel *and* reliably! This bodes well for connecting the Opuses (Opae?) to the target machines. Bye bye RS-232 . . .

To be continued . . .

Will Andrew and Steve ever get their 64 freely conversing with an Opus? Or are they both mute? Find out next month . . .

TAKE ME! TAK



Controversy rages over the roots of the ancient war game of chess. It is generally accepted that it is a mixture of a number of ancient pastimes, with China and the Middle East often cited as the main point of origin. A little-known fact however, is that the High Kings of Ireland played a game called Fichle during the long boring evenings spent at Tara, the ancient seat of Irish nobility. Many chess historians now believe that this old Gaelic custom has had a major bearing on the modern game – more possibly than any of the eastern influences.

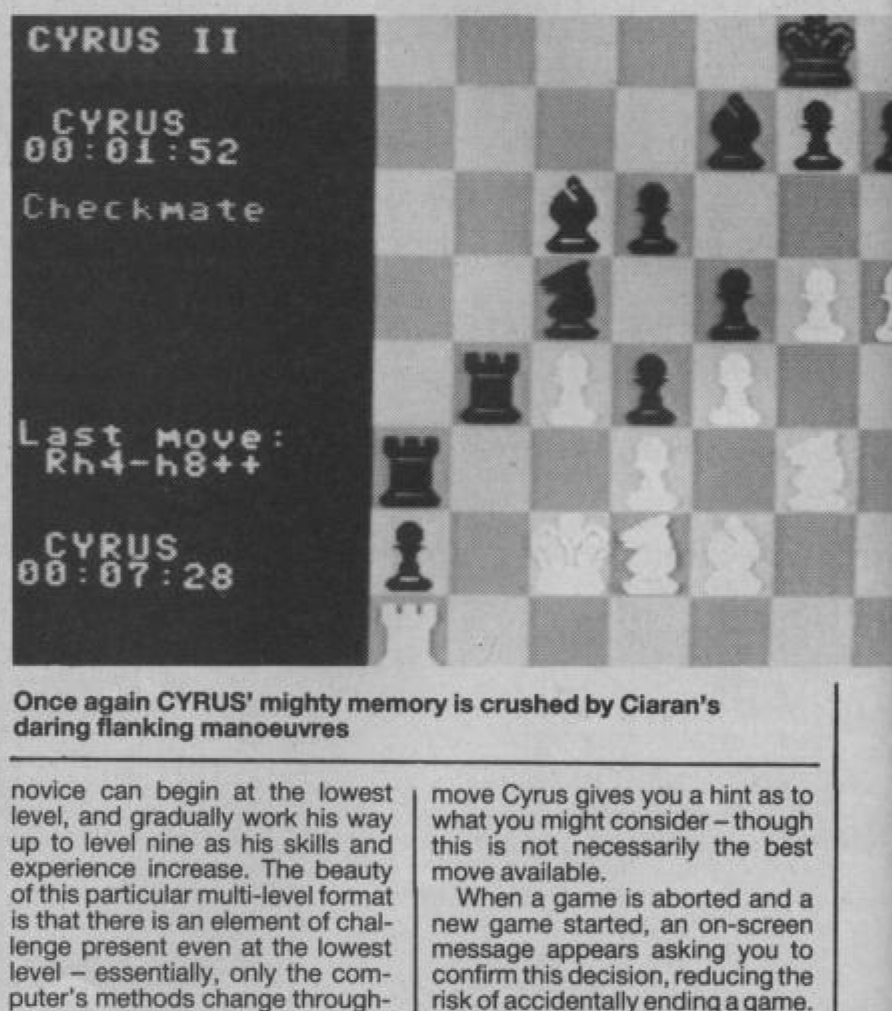
Therefore, as the only Irishman working on these premises (and one of the few people here who can be bothered to find something more challenging to do than obliterate a few aliens) it has fallen to Ciaran Brennan to assess the latest computer chess programs and report his findings. To help him in this noble venture, Ciaran has recruited the 1964 British All-Comers Underwater Chess Champion – Lee Paddon.

CYRUS II CHESS

Alligata, £11.95 cass or disk

Cyrus II has been around on various machine formats for over 18 months. It has clocked up an impressive sales figure of 70,000, making it one of the most successful microcomputer chess programs. The program has now been converted for the Commodore, and though it has lost some of its more attractive 'extras' in the process, it is nevertheless a long overdue and valuable addition to the Commodore's group of chess programs.

Cyrus II is a nine level chess program, designed with features to benefit players of all abilities. A novice can begin at the lowest level, and gradually work his way up to level nine as his skills and experience increase. The beauty of this particular multi-level format is that there is an element of challenge present even at the lowest level – essentially, only the computer's methods change throughout.



Once again CYRUS' mighty memory is crushed by Ciaran's daring flanking manoeuvres



The CYRUS II options screen, including a list of the ten previous moves



Pieces are moved by either cursor control or co-ordinate entry methods – co-ordinates are only displayed by the board if the latter function is in use. The two-dimensional board is displayed to the right of the screen, with the left side containing information relevant to the current game. Other information is contained in the menu, which can be accessed by pressing the space bar.

I found some of the contents of Cyrus' extensive menu to be particularly useful. Most notable of these is the 'hint' feature, brought into action by the **H** key. During the computer's move this can be used to show the move which it is currently considering. During your move Cyrus gives you a hint as to what you might consider – though this is not necessarily the best move available.

When a game is aborted and a new game started, an on-screen message appears asking you to confirm this decision, reducing the risk of accidentally ending a game. Pressing **M** during your move allows you to swap sides – performing the same action during Cyrus' move causes the computer to execute its best move immediately. If you do decide to change sides, you may want to invert the board. This is carried out by pressing **I**. It is also possible to play both sides yourself, or to allow Cyrus the same privilege.

Pressing **B** retracts a move and allows you to move again. This operation can be carried out in any situation, including Check and Checkmate.

This version of *Cyrus II* is unfortunately lacking some of the features available on other formats. It's a pity that the Save/Load option isn't included, as it is often

KE ME!

As the Queen said to the Bishop

useful if a game carries on for a particularly long time (this can happen quite frequently on the higher levels). Also missing is the 3D display option, and though this is purely cosmetic it does add an extra touch of realism – I for one am sorry that it's gone.

If you are looking for a challenging and enjoyable chess program, no matter what your ability, *Cyrus II* will undoubtedly meet your requirements.

Better still, Alligata software have an interesting trade-in offer for *Cyrus II*. If you already own a chess program, but are interested in getting your hands on *Cyrus II*, simply send your old program with a cheque or postal order for £6.95 to: **Alligata Software Ltd, Orange Street, Sheffield S1 4DW**. They will send you a brand new copy of *Cyrus II*. (Don't forget to state cassette or disk when placing your order). If however, you are not entirely satisfied with the performance of *Cyrus II*, Alligata will refund your money **and** your old program!

C B

Cyrus II shares most of the strengths and weaknesses of its competitors. It has a good book of openings, including some fairly obscure variations which will have even the expert racking his brains. The middle-game is fairly strong, but the program lacks an overall sense of 'vision' – it often fails to recognise the current focal point of the game, and goes off on a complete tangent. Like all chess games, where *Cyrus II* really falls apart is the end game. If you ever feel like beating a chess program, just swap off everything in sight and watch it struggle. This is because in the end game, patterns of pieces are more important than analysing series of moves, which is what the computer is programmed to do. The lack of feel in the middle game makes it a better attacker than defender, but it will rarely put together a dazzling mating combination – just win a pawn here and a piece there and grind you to death. Despite all this criticism, *Cyrus II* is one of the fastest and strongest chess programs I have come across. It can often produce an exciting, enjoyable game, and you can always accidentally pull the plug out if you're losing – the computer equivalent of tipping the board over.

L P

MASTER CHESS

Mastertronic, £1.99 cass

Mastertronic's addition to the ever-increasing range of computer chess games comes in the form of *Master Chess*, a multi-function budget program.

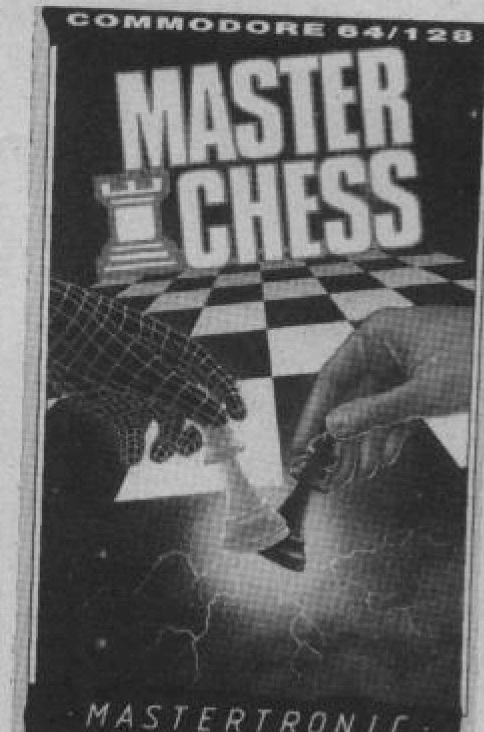
The board is of the standard two-dimensional variety, with the ranks numbered one to eight, and the files represented by letters **a** to **h**. This alpha-numeric system of co-ordinates is standard for both black and white (Black's King occupies **e8**, his Queen **d8**, and so on). Moves are executed by entering the co-ordinates of the piece which you intend to move, followed by the co-ordinates of its intended destination. For example, at the beginning of a game **d2 – d4** moves the White Queen's pawn forward two squares.

The program contains eight main functions, activated by pressing the relevant numeric key. RETURN simply exits the menu and returns to the current game screen. The 'skill' level of the computer opponent is altered via the SET LEVEL option – the amount of time (in seconds) that the computer is allowed to take in which to consider its moves is adjustable. The RE-ARRANGE feature allows the placing of any piece on any square – without restriction – and works from a current game position. SET-UP is similar to the previous function, this time working from a blank board. REPLAY goes back to the beginning of the game and plays it through move by move. The current game position can be saved onto tape for later reloading via the LOAD GAME option. Selecting NEW GAME discards the current set-up and returns to the start of game position.

Other features include the facility to change the colour of the board at the beginning of each new game, and the option of playing either black or white. The program is also capable of carrying out unusual moves such as *en passant* and *castling*. A nice feature is the graphic display of pieces taken, which appears at the side of the board and can be viewed by pressing the space bar while *Master Chess* deliberates.

Having listed the operations which this program can accomplish, the obvious question is: how do they actually work in practice? Unfortunately, the answer is 'not very well'. The SET LEVEL option doesn't appear to have any real effect, unless the computer is allowed about ten minutes per move – even then it often makes seemingly rash moves. There are also some basic and unforgivable flaws, which completely refute the manufacturer's claim that the program has been put together with beginners and improvers in mind. For instance, the computer occasionally makes stupid decisions which would be surprising even from the most inexperienced novice – this was especially noticeable at the lower levels, and includes such errors as the sacrifice of the Queen in order to gain a Pawn! On another occasion the computer conceded Checkmate when it had at least two obvious avenues of escape – very strange indeed.

An annoying aspect of the skill level option is that the program always takes exactly as long as it is allowed – even for the simplest and most obvious of moves. This may be useful for setting your



watch by, but it is particularly annoying when the computer takes ten minutes or more to consider its opening move!

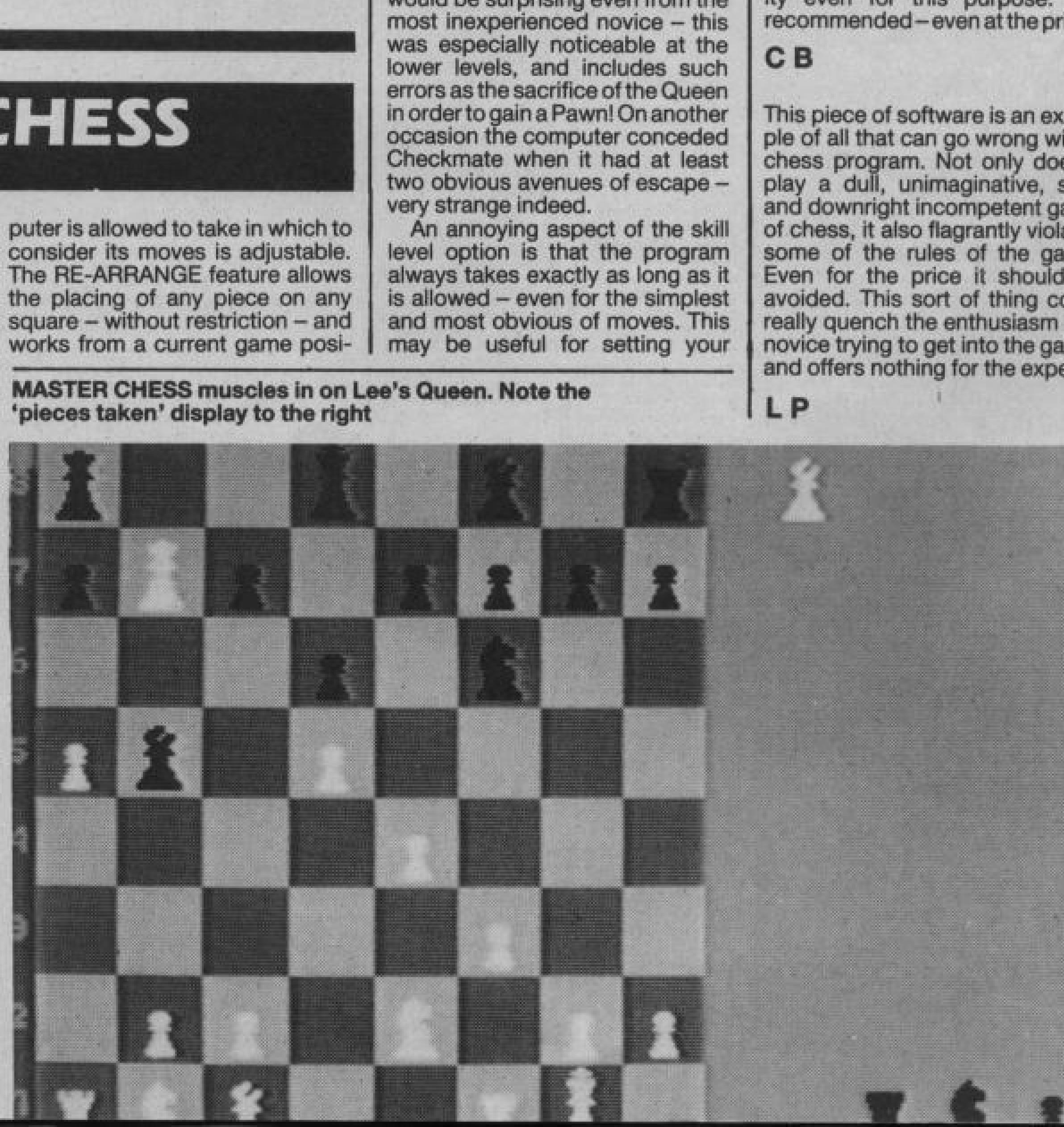
In conclusion, I wonder what value this (or indeed any) budget chess program actually offers. The only useful function it could fulfil is as a training program for young beginners who could not afford a more advanced and expensive package. However, the many faults which *Master Chess* incorporates tend to negate its suitability even for this purpose. Not recommended – even at the price.

C B

This piece of software is an example of all that can go wrong with a chess program. Not only does it play a dull, unimaginative, slow and downright incompetent game of chess, it also flagrantly violates some of the rules of the game. Even for the price it should be avoided. This sort of thing could really quench the enthusiasm of a novice trying to get into the game, and offers nothing for the expert.

L P

MASTER CHESS muscles in on Lee's Queen. Note the 'pieces taken' display to the right





THE SCORELORD'S HIGH-SCORING HEROES

1942 (Elite)
754,300 James Whitworth, Oldham, Lancs
165,800 Steve Lee, Guildford, Surrey
126,600 Theo Alexander, Sidcup, Kent

ALLEYKAT (Hewson)
6,052,500 J Bolton, Oldbury, W Mids
5,119,950 Iain Reddick, Kirkaldy, Fife
5,118,550 Chris Rogerson, Chester-Le-Street, Co Durham

ANTIRIAD (Palace)
Game completed in:
6:03 Mins Ian Church, North Shields, Tyne and Wear
7:45 mins Ged Keaveney, Huddersfield, W Yorks
9:00 mins Stephen Blidgeon, Wythenshawe, Manchester

ACE (Cascade)
83,380 M Horsey, Waltham Abbey, Kent
26,890 John Doyle, Kilmarnoch, Ayrshire
25,300 James Duffy, Cheylesmore, Coventry

AVENGER (Gremlin Graphics)
100% Karim Bovali, London SW17
55% Adrian King, Swindon, Wilts
43% Matthew Brown, Swindon, Wilts

BOMB JACK (Elite)
3,264,600 Wayne Winter, Lawrence Weston, Bristol
1,384,130 Casey Gallagher, Reading, Berks
1,248,000 Hatti Jarvelin, Oulu 14, Finland

BREAKTHRU (US Gold)
111,900 Gary Rice, Colchester, Essex
93,060 Peter Shields, Brighton
64,500 Martin Watson, Hull, Humbs

CAULDRON II (Palace)
1,508,550 Cliff Nobresa, St Helier, Jersey
153,750 John Reynolds, Duxford, Cambridge
132,400 Shaun Russell, Shildon, Co Durham

CRYSTAL CASTLES (US Gold)
677,992 Julian Rignall, ZZAP! Towers
648,200 Nigel Leather, Northwich, Cheshire
551,978 Dene Claridge, Kingswood, W Mids

DRAGON'S LAIR (Software Projects)
32,740 Martin Coyle, Clifton, Notts
32,520 Neil Edge, London SE2
28,857 Gary Turner, Swidon, Wiltshire

DAN DARE (Virgin)
7,423 Sankar Sahdevan, London E12
7,297 Shaun Alcock, Tyldesley, Manchester
6,971 Russel Flaherty, Liverpool L14

ENCOUNTER (Novagen)
1,888,000 Anon, Crewe, Cheshire
1,488,900 Kenneth Shewry, Cramlington, N Humbs
1,135,500 Stephen Blidgeon, Wythenshawe, Manchester

FIRELORD (Hewson)
116,805 Damian Ward, Harrogate, W Yorks
17,895 Andrew Western, London SW11

FLOYD THE DROID (Ariolasoft)
7,970 Matthew Williams, Yeovil, Somerset
6,040 Sam Shields, Canterbury, Kent
4,920 M J Lenton, Burton-on-Trent, Staffs

FIST II (Melbourne House)
1,220,000 Steven Guilfoyle, Oldham
602,800 Andrew Gosling, Longridge, Lancs
596,800 Ali Kerswell, Guildford, Surrey

FIST II TOURNAMENT (Melbourne House)
5,096,000 Kevin Lennard, St Helier, Sark
4,000,600 Warren Masterson, St Peterbury, Herm
3,786,400 P Arkwright, Great Harwood, Lancs

GAUNTLET (US Gold)
MERLIN THE WIZARD
2,540,903 Ged Keaveney, Huddersfield, W Yorks
1,143,437 Alistair McNally, Prestwick
416,028 Richard Tatterton, Holgate, York

QUESTOR THE ELF
1,333,708 Steven Matthews, Portsmouth, Hants
1,096,078 William Best, Froome, Somerset
436,945 Martin Lear, Huddersfield, W Yorks

THOR THE WARRIOR
1,742,772 K Fairbrother, Stapleford, Notts
540,723 Graeme Smith, Little Stoke, Bristol
304,503 Ronnie White, Harlow, Essex

THYRA THE VALKYRIE
725,322 Carlo Ianco, St Albans, Herts
394,560 C Cainsell, Southampton, Hants
236,894 M Caswell, Abergavenny

GRIBBLY'S DAY OUT (Hewson)
64,879 Ryan Kelly, Glasgow
62,899 Peter Evans, Cardigan, Dyfed
15,729 Tim Veal, Portishead, Bristol

GREEN BERET (Imagine)
1,301,850 Mark Cunningham, Newtown Abbey, Co Antrim
1,059,870 Martin/Jon Black, Sheffield
755,800 John White, Whitefield, Manchester

GHOSTS AND GOBLINS (Elite)
242,000 Stuart Galloway, Yardley Wood, Birmingham
203,900 Gavin Fraser, Cradlehall, Inverness
200,000 Ryan Kelly, Glasgow

HERCULES (Alpha Omega)
755,500 Robert Hemphill, Port Glasgow
560,910 G Beddows, Rugeley, Staffs
511,080 Scott Carstairs, Paisley, Renfrewshire

INTERNATIONAL KARATE (System 3)
336,750 Peter Hunt, Hook, Hants
320,950 Ryan Kelly, Glasgow
310,000 Andrew Hardy, North Shields, Tyne and Wear

IRIDIS ALPHA (Llamasoft)
194,260 Jon Wood, Edgeware, Middx
141,050 C Gorham, Braintree, Essex
138,200 Michael Pinder, Blackburn, Lancs

JACK THE NIPPER (Gremlin Graphics)
100% Chris White, Matlock, Derbyshire
100% Mark Corrigan, Burnley, Lancs
94% Marc Hodge, Selby, N Yorks

JEEP COMMAND (Bug Byte)
227,380 Marc Hodge, Selby, N Yorks
149,800 David Minton, Bristol
125,240 David Burton, Stoke-on-Trent, Staffs

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4,385,990 Stephen Pennel, Fordingbridge, Hants
3,802,983 Andrew Dallyn, Braughton, Devon
1,519,446 Henry Gibney, London N7

KORONIS RIFT (Activision)
134,960 Stephen Mason, Stevenage, Herts
128,780 Mark Tortolano, Stirling, Scotland
96,430 Colin Burroughs, Ipswich, Suffolk

KNIGHT GAMES (English Software)
TOTAL:
66,345 Simon Wilcox, Ipswich, Suffolk
65,700 Pieter Collins, Colchester, Essex
65,510 Alex Cassidy, Kirkintilloch

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-24 Victor Gordon, Co Armagh, N Ireland
-24 Mick Gray, Downhead Park, Milton Keynes

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-23 Paul Allan, Aberdeen
-22 Dick Todd, London SW11
-22 Trevor Lacey, Blaenplwyf, Dyfed

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-21 Tom McKee, Dingwall, Ross-shire
-19 A J Lowery, Chorley, Lancs

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7,937 Lee Smith, Billingham, Cleveland
7,455 Graeme Dutch, Tillydrome, Aberdeen

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271,000 Julian Rignall, ZZAP! Towers
205,700 Robert Hemphill, Port Glasgow, Renfrewshire
192,900 Alan Brown, Brighton, W Sussex

MONTEZUMA'S REVENGE (Databyte)
363,650 Jennifer Yates, Bolton, Lancs
183,250 Deborah Yates, Bolton, Lancs

MERCENARY: THE SECOND CITY (Novagen)
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523,981cr Raymond Catalan, Ruislip, Middx
523,981cr Ian Robinson, London N17

MISSION AD (Odin)
49,320 Mark Craft, Bearwood, Bournemouth
48,670 David Barker, Feltham, Middx
28,555 Ali Kerswell, Guildford, Surrey

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175,745 M J Lenton, Burton-on-Trent, Staffs
4,065 Paul Want, Harrogate, N Yorks
3,885 Paul Tudor, Stourbridge, Pedmore

PAPERBOY (Elite)
103,700 David Barker, Bedfont, Middx
94,800 Richard Justo, Littlehampton, W Sussex
71,300 Chris Mclean, Helsby, Cheshire

PANTHER (Mastertronic)
200,940 Steve Lee, Guildford, Surrey
51,200 Paul Morgan, Hitchin, Herts
29,700 Roger Martin, London W1

PARADROID (Hewson)
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296,435 Jeremy Foy, Tring, Herts
274,715 Jessamine Cottage, Whitchurch, Shropshire

PING PONG (Imagine)
62,200 Graeme Dutch, Tillydrone, Aberdeen
57,040 Barrie Hallett, Lawrence Weston, Bristol
51,300 Anoosh Lachin, London W13

PHANTOMS OF THE ASTEROID (Mastertronic)
561,412 M A Grist, Reading, Berks
334,054 Steve Lee, Guildford, Surrey
286,064 Chris Napier, Long Marston, Herts

PARALLAX (Ocean)
106,850 Ali Kerswell, Guildford, Surrey
78,400 Adam Pracy, Newton Flotman, Norwich
66,480 J Macmanus, Barnstaple, Devon

ROCK 'N' WRESTLE (Melbourne House)
2,655,200 Alan Smith, Glenrothers, Fife
941,300 Graeme Dutch, Tillydrone, Aberdeen
842,480 Jamie Ford, Southampton

RAMBO (Ocean)
7,971,900 Gavin Burnett, Westhill, Inverness
7,142,600 Gary Turner, Swindon, Wiltshire
6,909,600 Ian Church, North Shields, Tyne and Wear

RAGING BEAST (Firebird)
131,906 Mark Gunningham, Newtown Abbey, CO Antrim
104,374 Paul Ellis, Barnehurst, Kent
67,092 Matthew Minshull, Great Barr, Birmingham

SANXION (Thalamus)
276,620 Shaun Williamson, South Wirral
232,650 Steven Malpass, Blurton, Stoke-on-Trent
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$669,700 John Doyle, Kilmarnoch, Ayrshire
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4,593,910 Ian George, Cambridge

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TAU CETI (CRL)
21,055 Andrew Tarski, Dursley, Glos
20,465 Robert Elliot, Middlesbrough, Cleveland
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328,500 Robert Elliot, Middlesborough, Cleveland

TRAILBLAZER (Gremlin Graphics)
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715,760 Tony Holland, Leicester
705,530 Jon Rushmere, Enfield, Middx

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205,100 Ali Kerswell, Guildford, Surrey

URIDIUM (Hewson)
22,906,385 CN, SP, MD, JK, Marston Green, Birmingham
3,820,020 David Horsburgh, Uddington, Glasgow
3,428,985 Andrew Mackay, Liverpool 18

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24,600 D A Ashcroft, Wirral, Cheshire
21,200 Danny Pratt, Southampton
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WARHAWK (Firebird)
3,172,288 Peter Hunt, Hook, Hants
1,701,568 Jake E, Hill Top, West Brom
1,484,200 Michael Shanks, Norwich, Norfolk

WAR (Martech)
270,782 Ricky Smith, Basingstoke, Hants
153,968 Steve Lee, Guioldford, Surrey
14,649 Ali Kerswell, Guildford, Surrey

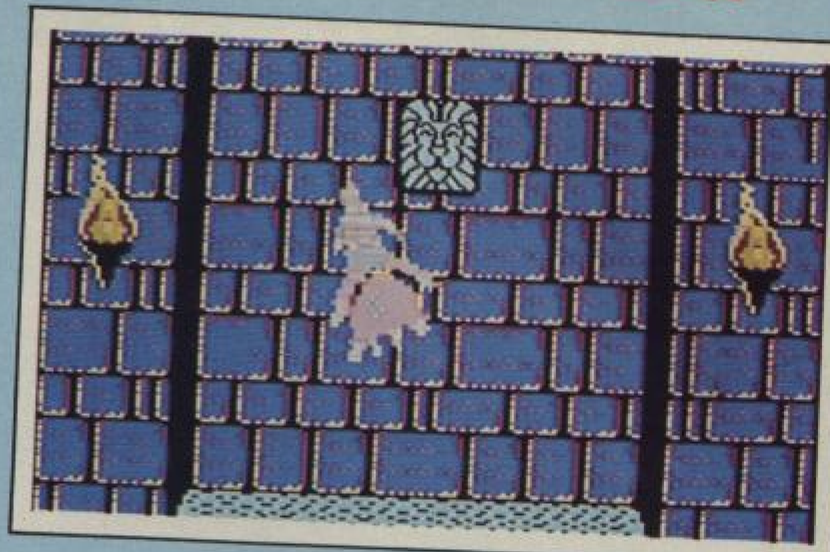
XEVIOUS (US Gold)
56,710 Gavin Burnett, Westhill, Inverness
55,500 Gary Penn, ZZAP! Towers
41,420 Tony Holland, Leicester

YIE AR KUNG FU (Imagine)
152,260,000 Scott Gracen, Whitley Bay, Tyne and Wear
108,213,350 Stef Hendrie, Bishopston, Renfrewshire
92,432,400 Riaz Reshamwala, London NW4

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ZZAP! ERRATUM



MAGICAL FLYING HORSE
With the sword and magic pot in his grasp, Dirk decides to beat a hasty retreat on a magical flying horse. Unfortunately the horse is mentally deficient and runs blindly at high speed down an ancient corridor filled with obstacles. Left and right movements of the joystick are used to guide the horse and rider around the hazards – hit one and the hero becomes a mixture of tin and flesh.

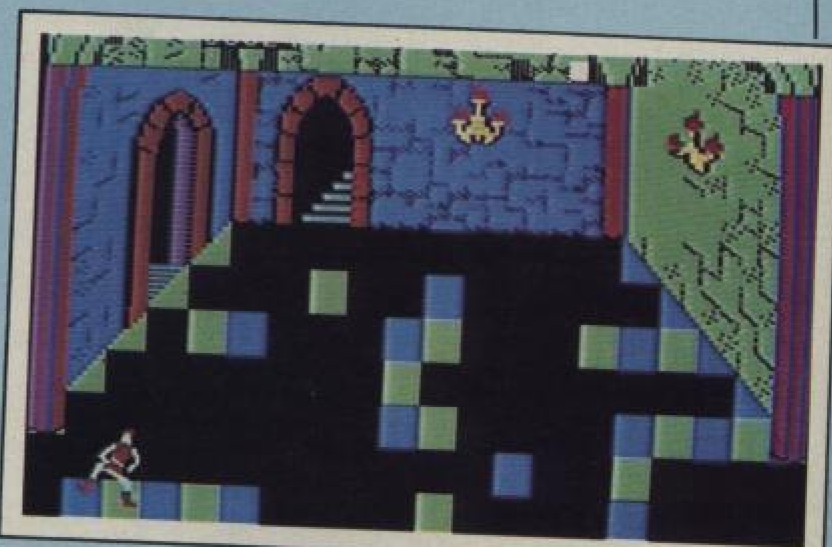
ESCAPE FROM SINGE'S CASTLE

DRAGON'S LAIR PART II

Software Projects, £9.95 cass, £14.95 disk, joystick only



Oh dear. Some silly so . . . er, 'sossidge' in Art slipped up and forgot to slap down half of the *Dragon's Lair II* review in the last issue. Tut tut. Slap, slap, s-lappity slap. There's not much point in re-printing the whole review, so to make amends here are the four missing sections . . . along with the ratings (as seen last month).



THRONE ROOM
This screen is very similar to its arcade counterpart with large characters being used to portray the action. The Lizard King has left a series of traps which the brave knight has to successfully negotiate . . . or die in the attempt. Hazards include a giant firey hand, and balls of electric fire which have to be dodged or destroyed if Dirk is to progress.



MYSTIC MOSAIC
Dirk has to make his way across a room, but parts of the tiled floor keep disappearing, exposing the bottomless pit below. There is a safe path across the screen which has to be found, but the problem is that one wrong move results in the heroic knight plummeting into the depths. Just to make matters worse, there is a giant bat swooping low over the floor which has to be killed by sword – otherwise it attacks, forcing Dirk into the pit.

PRESENTATION 97%
Brilliant cassette multi-loading system and superb in-game presentation.

GRAPHICS 92%
Vary from very good to excellent, depending on the screen.

SOUND 97%
The nine different tunes and jingles add a fabulous atmosphere to the action.

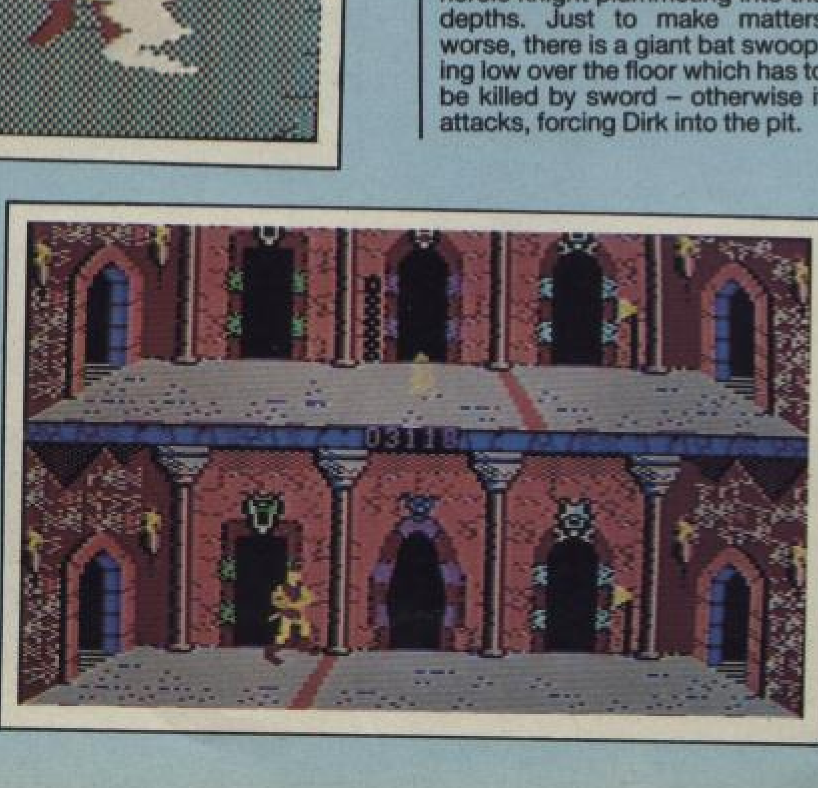
HOOKABILITY 92%
Instant playability with a perfect balance between frustration and a sense of achievement.

LASTABILITY 88%
Eight tough but addictive scenarios to solve.

VALUE 90%
Lots of quality game for your money.

OVERALL 90%
An excellent arcade conversion consisting of eight varied and addictive mini-games.

DUNGEONS OF THE LIZARD KING
Dirk's sword has been stolen and stuck to the magic pot of gold by the Lizard King. The objective in this section is to journey through the maze of flick screen dungeons, pick up both articles, and escape through the exit before the baton-wielding Lizard King catches up. Magic force-fields impede the hero's progress and the Lizard King tries to head the hero off whenever he can.



PLAY HUNT THE DRAGON

Over there on the left is the rest of the review of *Dragon's Lair II – Escape from Singe's Castle*. **Software Projects** went to all the trouble of putting eight levels in their game, and the Spiky Haired Ones played it and played it until they had taken Dirk the Daring through all eight levels. Then they wrote the review, pausing only for refreshment breaks.

Poor old Dirk only ended up with a four-level quest. Or so it seemed from the review last month – an Art Minion slipped with the scalpel and truncated Dirk's adventure. To make amends, this selfsame minion has created a septet of dragons for Dirk to do battle with this issue, but only one of them is the real foe.

There are three pairs of twins, dragon duos that have been created by magic to confuse our hero. Only one dragon is truly unique, and he's the one that has to be killed. Which is where you come in.



ZZAP! COMP

50 COPIES OF DRAGON'S LAIR II TO BE WON

Study the seven dragons on this page and match up the twins. Ring round the unique scaly monster, complete the coupon and whizz your entry in to **DRAGON BASHING, ZZAP! Towers, PO Box 10, Ludlow, Shropshire SY8 1DB** making sure your entry arrives by March 12th.

The first four correct answers drawn from the pile of entries will earn the senders a copy of the game, *Dragon's Lair II* (containing all eight levels) and a framed Cromalin colour picture, taken from the laser disk version of *Dragon's Lair*. No less than 50 runners-up are set to collect a copy of the game.





SPOT THE REAL DRAGON

NAME ....

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....

..........**POST CODE** ....


SAILING
You'll need your life-jacket for this battle against the elements!
Based on the world-famous Americas Cup Race, Sailing gives you hours of thrills (and hopefully no spills) on the ocean wave.
First, you design your own yacht – choosing the specifications you think will win the day.
Then it's tactics all the way as the battle commences.
Choose the nation you want to represent, then challenge the yachts two places above you in the table. With them out of the way, you're ready to beat the next ones and the next, until you're the winner.
Out there on the ocean you'll need all your skills as a seaman to steer your yacht around the buoys on the course, and to put up and take down the spinnaker (winding the joystick).
Don't forget to watch out for the weather. Just one gust of wind can blow your chances of winning.
And remember. Only the strongest can survive the course and beat fifteen other nations in one of the greatest ocean races of all time.
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ENTERTAINMENT SOFTWARE
Available on Commodore 64/128 cassette (£9.99) and disk (£14.99)
Soon to be available on Amstrad CPC cassette (£9.99) and disk (£14.99) and Spectrum 48K/128K/+ (£7.99)
Mail Order: Activision (UK) Ltd., 23 Pond Street, London NW3 2PN

PNEUMATIC HAMMERS

Andromeda/Firebird, £1.99 cass, joystick only

In the world of international trouble-shooting, improvisation is the key. For instance, did you know that Red Adair once dealt with a major rig blow-out by using his secretary's hairpin? They don't make them like that anymore!

In Pneumatic Hammers, YOU are the trouble-shooter. The handle of a pile-driving machine at a research base has sheered off, thus rendering the machine uncontrollable. The continuous hammering is starting to crumble the wall of the canyon where the base is situated – minor rockslides have started, and the pile-driver is going to bury itself if something isn't done soon. The only solution is to collect the gold scattered around the canyon, and melt it down to form a new handle.

The research base consists of five rooms connected by a lift. The building is in the middle of a stream running down the canyon, with piles being driven into the river-bed on either side. The canyon walls slope gradually upwards from the river, with rubble from the landslides piling up at the river's edge.

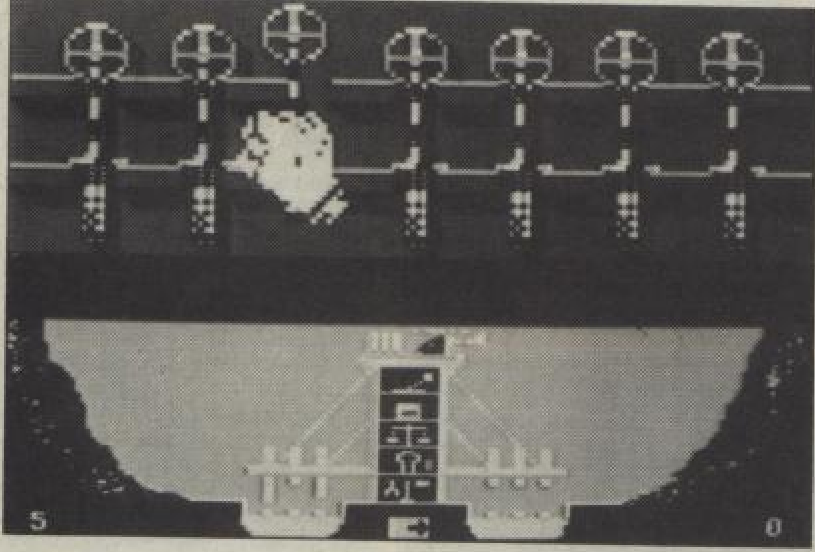
To get to the mineral-rich rubble, you have to hop across the river using the piles as stepping stones. There is the ever-present danger of being crushed by the pile-drivers while making this crossing, but this isn't as bad as it sounds – your hard hat protects offers protection, and you merely lose balance and fall into the river.

When you reach your destination, the screen switches from a side-on view of the base to an overhead view of a pile of rubble. A signal sounds as your metal detector sweeps across the debris, and when gold is detected, the signal increases in pitch. After pin-pointing the nugget, the metal detector is put down and a hand appears, ready to take the precious mineral.

Occasionally a landslide occurs, burying any objects in its patch – including the metal detector if it is not safely in your grasp. Fortunately, you are indestructible, so a landslide never buries you.

When enough gold has been collected, it's time to hop back to the base and weigh the nuggets to determine their purity – only nuggets weighing 10, 20, 50 or 100g are acceptable. Once you have enough nuggets, you can melt them in the furnace.

An options screen allows you to determine the weight of the handle – and thus the duration of the game, as more gold is required to make a heavier handle. The length of time between landslides, and the frequency of the pile-drivers can also be defined.





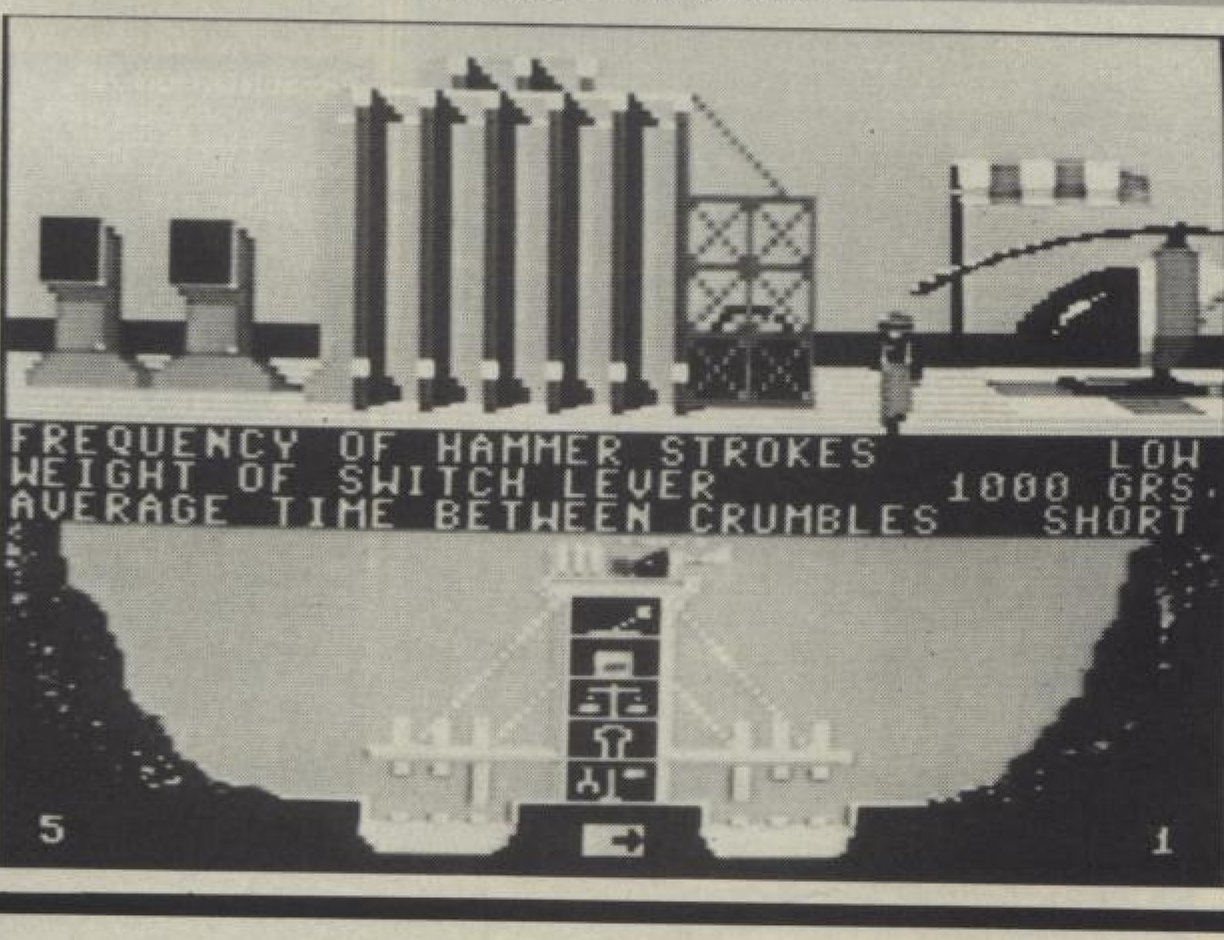
This is a completely original game which plops nicely into the mainstream of the budget game river. The backdrops are very pretty, although the view is ruined by the exceptionally chunky sprites that wobble in the foreground. The program is a bit fussy when it comes to changing tools, and you have to position the hand over the correct pixel if you want to pick up or drop something. Jumping across the river without falling in also takes some doing. This might be off-putting to a first-time player, but if you're prepared to stick at it, there's a fair bit of enjoyment to be had.



Gathering up the required number of nuggets is a tedious and repetitive process, although fairly absorbing at first. But if the to-ing and fro-ing wasn't bad enough, some tasks are very awkward as the computer is fussy about the precise positioning of the 'hand' cursor. If you're prepared to take the time to get into this game, you might find it rewarding – one for the very persistent and patient types amongst you perhaps?



Pneumatic Hammers is highly original, which is to be expected coming from Andromeda, as they always attempt something new. However, there isn't much to it, and what's there is very tedious – after playing for an hour or so I quickly lost interest. Ah well, at least Firebird had the sense to release this at a budget price – it's certainly not worth much more than two quid.



PRESENTATION 68%
Adequate instructions, and good in-game presentation.

GRAPHICS 67%
Pleasant backdrops marred by crude sprites.

SOUND 49%
Suitable spot effects.

HOOKABILITY 57%
Difficult to get to grips with due to its originality.

LASTABILITY 61%
Perseverance will probably be rewarded.

VALUE 69%
An acceptable quota of fun for your two quid.

OVERALL 58%
An original and mildly entertaining piece of budget software.

AGENT ORANGE

Quicksilva, £9.95 cass, joystick or keys

A race of aliens are moving from planet to planet, planting a strange weed that chokes the populace. Eight planets have been affected so far, and the only thing capable of stopping them is your squadron of five fighters and their cargo of defoliant – *Agent Orange*.

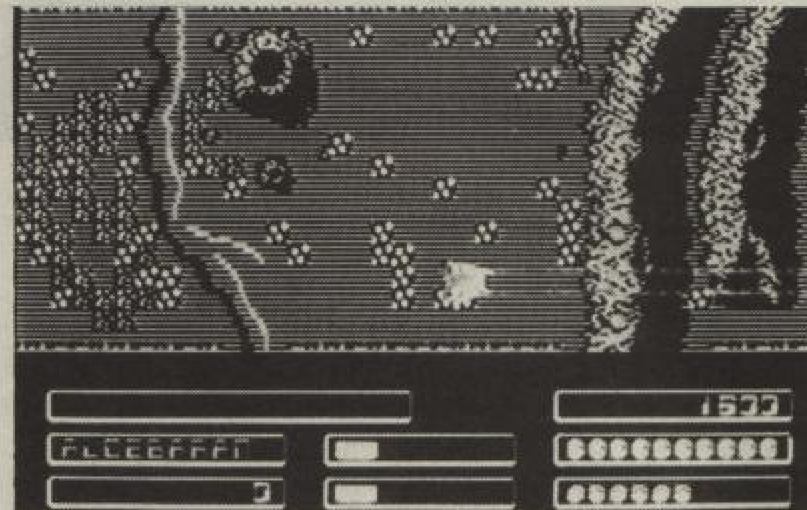
A mothership is used to take the squadron from one planet to the next, and as soon as it arrives the alien plants begin to grow. Launching a fighter, you have to fight off the alien fighters which guard the deadly crop, then try to plant and harvest your own safe crops whilst burning down the enemy weeds.

The action is viewed from above, and scrolls horizontally. Pressing the fire button releases a trail of plants which begin to grow as soon as they hit the ground. When an alien ship is destroyed, a seed pod is left behind which can be picked up and used to boost the fighter's seed supply.



Beneath the superficial gloss is a very simple and unchallenging shoot 'em up. Most people will just trade up to get a few really good ships, then blast the hell out of everything in sight. The trouble is, the money you get for a full hold is the same as the trade in price of the original seeds! The scrolling background has some reasonable features, but the screen judders as it scrolls. With a little more thorough testing of the design, this might have been a good little game.

The crops are collected by moving over them – however, the fighter can only hold a limited harvest, and exceeding this load causes it to crash.

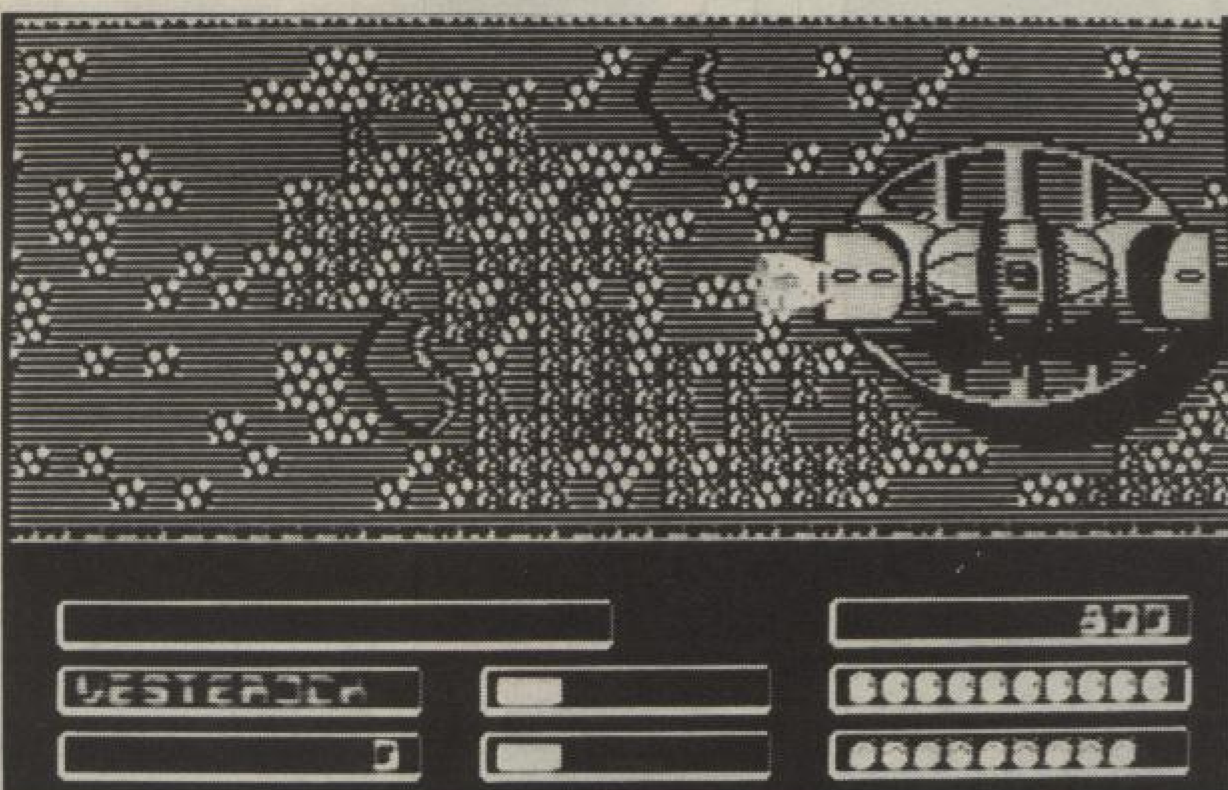


There are two types of weed: alien and indigenous. The former can be burnt, but the indigenous weed is more difficult to destroy and eventually chokes everything. When this happens, you have no option but to return to the mother ship and leave for home, although the mother ship cannot take off with more than 500 units of cargo on board.

The cargo is off-loaded at your home planet, and money is automatically added to your total, allowing you to buy a new, more powerful ship. Each time this is done, the price of the ships goes up, but their shields become more powerful.



I'm sick to death with crummy two-way scrolling shoot 'em ups – why do companies keep churning them out onto the market? There's no disguising them, and they can be sniffed out at a hundred yards. This one has a pretty front end, but it's like gift wrapping an empty cardboard box. The gameplay lacks all the essential elements of an exciting shoot 'em up, and the whole thing gets predictably boring soon after the first encounter. As for the tenner price tag slapped onto it . . . well, you could have Uridium Plus/Paradroid **for the same price.**





PRESENTATION 76%
Sufficient instructions and a load/save facility, but the program lacks polish and options.

GRAPHICS 41%
Bland sprites and unimaginative backdrops which lack colour.

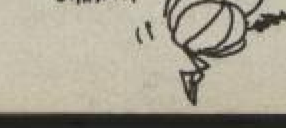
SOUND 36%
Dire title tune, and equally poor spot effects.

HOOKABILITY 46%
Easy enough to get into, but there's not much to stimulate.

LASTABILITY 31%
Eight repetitive levels combined with simplistic shoot 'em up action.

VALUE 29%
Expensive for such an unprofessional and lack-lustre product.

OVERALL 37%
A bland shoot 'em up which lacks excitement, depth and playability.



TERRA COGNITA

Code Masters, £1.99 cass

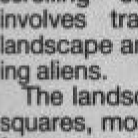
The Krion are out in force, eager to destroy anything human that gets in the way – which means you, in the seat of your fighter. A mother ship, and safety, is 100 vertically scrolling scrolling screens away, and involves traversing a tortuous landscape and destroying attacking aliens.

The landscape is composed of squares, mostly solid walls which form mazes and corridors – some leading to safety, and others to dead ends. Hitting a wall destroys your fighter, which means it has to take off again from the nearest launch pad. Another hazard is the time shift square, which plonks you back at the beginning of the first screen.

Points are scored by passing over bonus squares, and shooting the alien droids which drift across the landscape. Droids can also be destroyed by first passing over a square which gives the ship invincibility, and then smashing into them. However, smashing into walls still results in death.

Squares labelled 'plus' and 'minus' temporarily affect the speed of the craft. The minus squares are vital, as the ship's speed must decrease for it to be able to negotiate some of the more difficult maze sections.

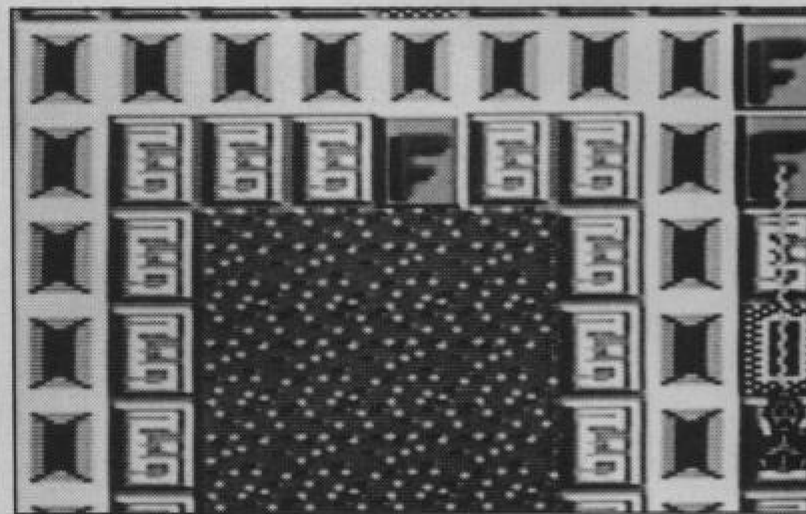
Other squares provide extra lives and fuel – which is used up very rapidly, so virtually every fuel square must be taken to survive. When the ship moves into a new section, the 'clear' squares change in style – passing 100 of these, and you're home and dry.

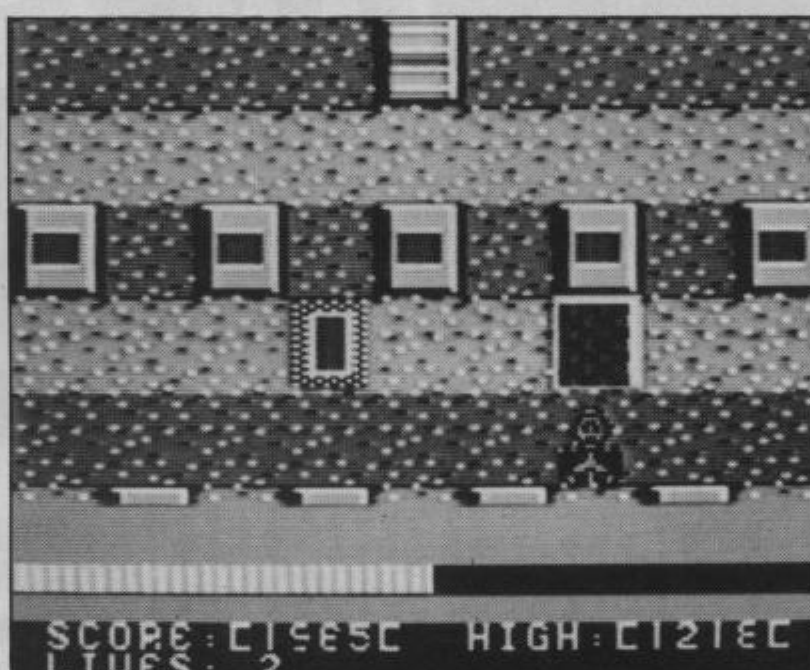


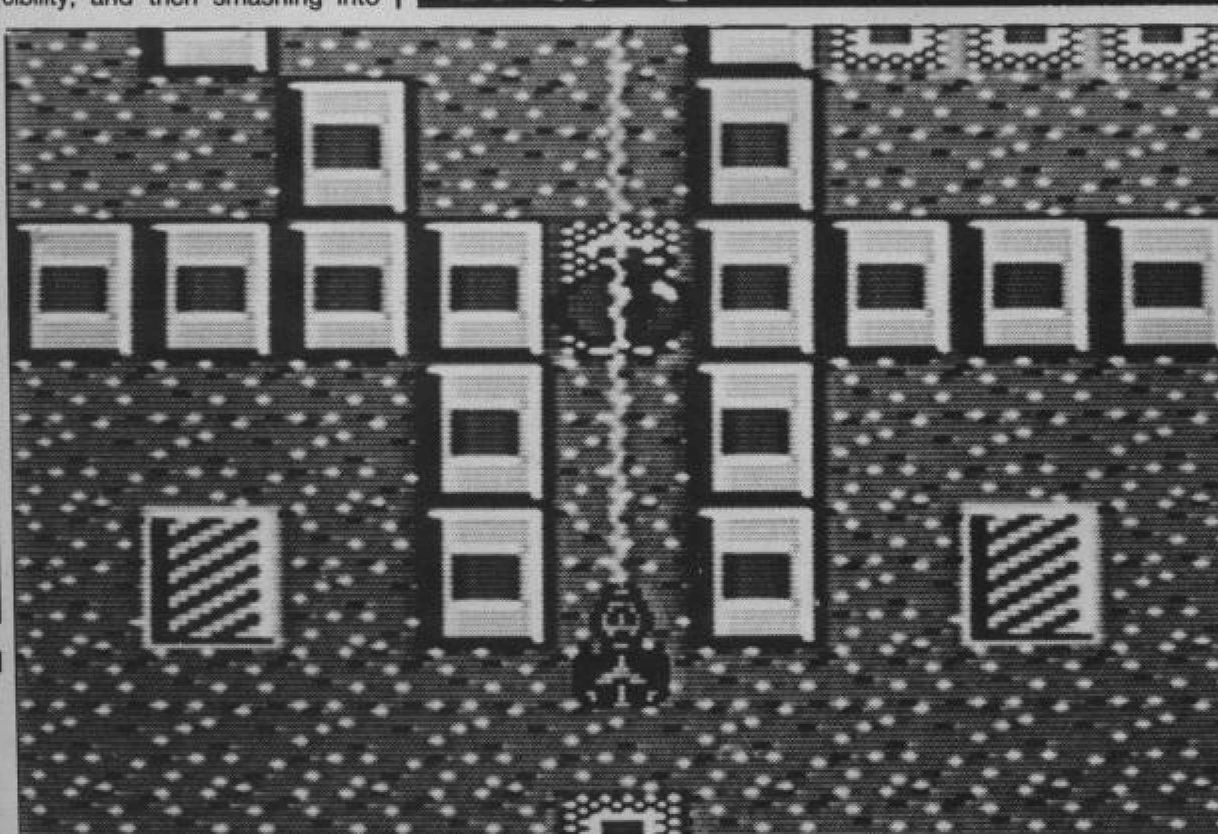
I don't believe it. ANOTHER vertically scrolling shoot 'em up. I don't want to see any more, please – even at a budget price. This particular genre has been beaten senselessly to the floor, and Terra Cognita **has the audacity to kick it while it's helplessly convulsing on the floor. Once again, what we have here is nothing special – it's repetitive, and the unclear backdrops only serve to confuse. To make matters worse, it's very frustrating, especially when you have to go back to the start when you die. Unless you're a sucker for run-of-the-mill, vertically scrolling shoot 'em ups, don't bother with** Terra Cognita.



This is a bland, vertically scrolling shoot 'em up which has many frustrating points. The backdrops make the going really tough – sometimes it's virtually impossible to see where your ship and the attacking aliens are. It's also frustrating having to find out the hard way which squares can be traversed safely and which can't. The objective is to make your way through the program's hundred screens, a task which can only be completed if the landscape is meticulously learned – and personally I don't think this game deserves that sort of perseverance. If you've got a spare couple of quid . . . shop around – there are loads of better budget games than this.









As you would have expected from their pedigree, Code Masters are making a name for themselves by producing highly playable, good quality budget games. There is nothing terribly original here, but it is all very nicely packaged – and cheap. I found the repeated background changes very confusing, as all the metallic detail makes it difficult to distinguish the droids from your ship. Also, when you change section it takes quite a while to sort out what's background and what's wall – very off-putting, but perhaps that was the idea. Still, this is a very polished product that should find favour with the shoot 'em up fraternity.

PRESENTATION 71%
Average, with a bog-standard title screen and in-game presentation.

GRAPHICS 49%
Repetitive, bland and occasionally messy backdrops, and simple sprites.

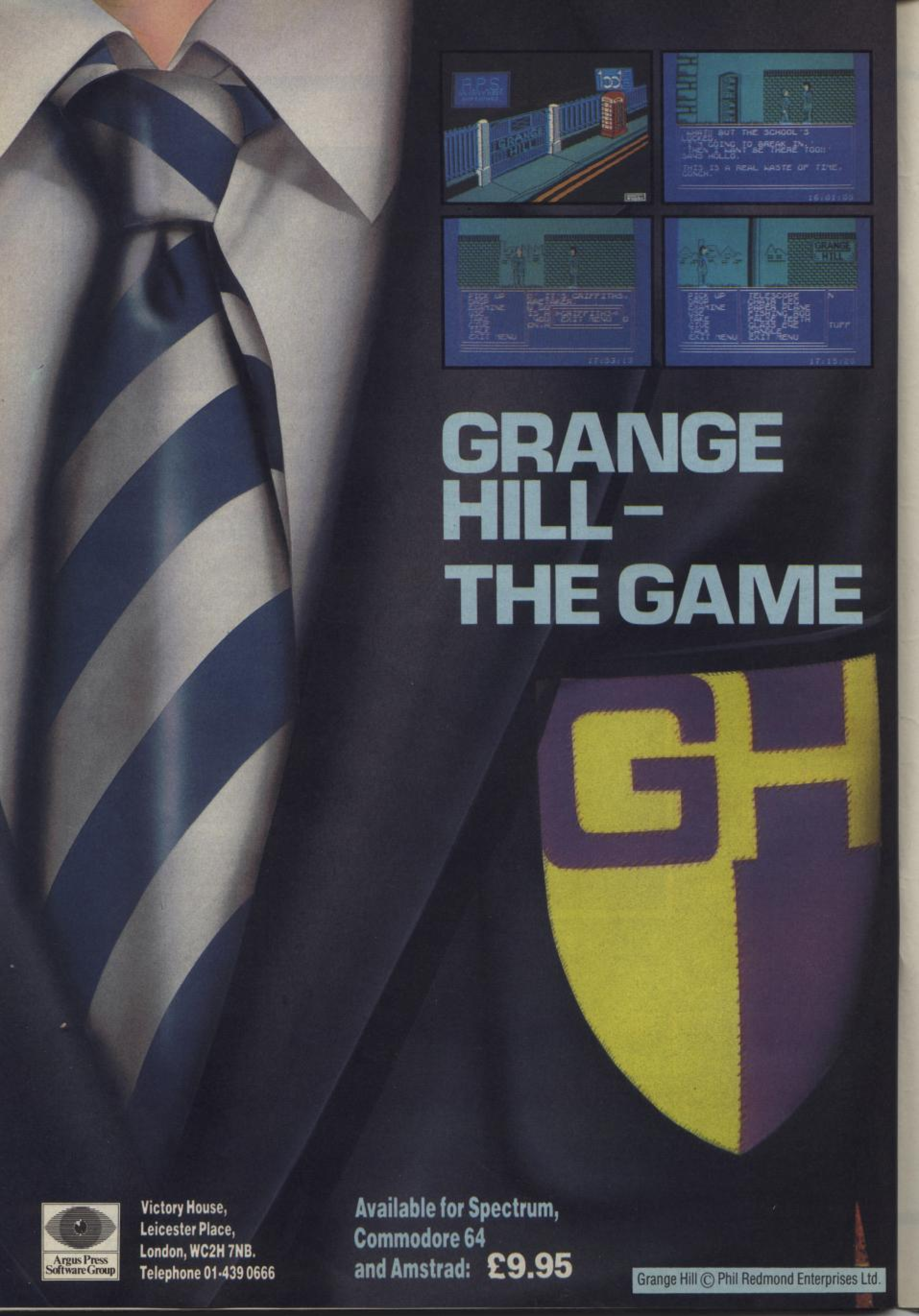
SOUND 62%
Adequate tunes and spot FX.

HOOKABILITY 45%
Easy enough to get into, mainly because it's all been seen before . . .

LASTABILITY 38%
. . . which is why it proves so dull.

VALUE 48%
It would be a cheek to charge much more.

OVERALL 39%
Dilutes the vertically scrolling shoot 'em up theme to almost tasteless proportions.



GRANGE HILL – THE GAME
Argus Press Software Group
Victory House, Leicester Place, London, WC2H 7NB. Telephone 01-439 0666
Available for Spectrum, Commodore 64 and Amstrad: £9.95
Grange Hill © Phil Redmond Enterprises Ltd.

TERROR OF THE DEEP

Mirrorsoft, £9.95 cass, £14.95 disk, joystick only

Something strange is happening in the depths of Loch Ness – and it's nothing to do with Nessy. The loch has become infested with potentially dangerous alien creatures – and you have been chosen to eradicate the source of this alien threat. So, in the comfort of an ageing diving bell, you are lowered to the lake's bed and your mission begins . . .

The screen displays a view out of the diving bell – beneath this is a series of switches used to control the craft, adjusting its speed and direction. Moving the joystick left or right causes a hand to move across the controls, which are activated by pushing the joystick up or down.



There is a lot of atmosphere here of the type that made *The Eidolon* such a great game. But unfortunately the task is rather dull – just shooting alien creatures. Still, it's not just a question of blasting away, as some thought has to go into maintaining 'life support systems' to stay alive. The graphics are intricately detailed, especially the sea creatures and the interior of the bell. I could have really enjoyed this if there was a little more plot – but there isn't enough variety to sustain the initial interest.

Attached to the top of the craft is a spotlight, used to illuminate your surroundings, and oxygen is circulated via a hand-pump. Energy is in short supply, so every so often you have to turn a wheel (situated at the bottom right of the screen) to boosts your energy level – at the expense of a loss of fuel. A limited supply of spears is also kept on board, along with two bombs – the fire button is used to launch either weapon.

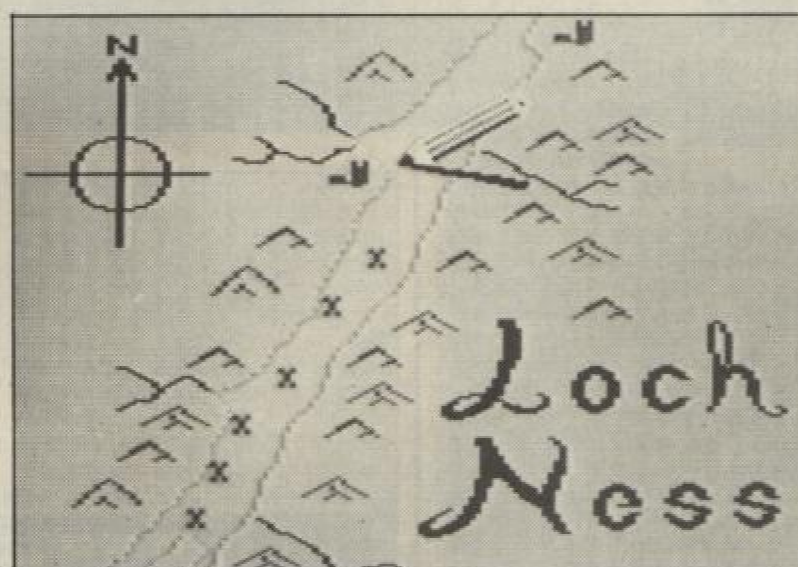


Initially interesting and exciting, this complicated looking arcade adventure tends to pall when you've sat around for a while shooting things. I thought that Terror of the Deep **was going to have the same sort of depth of plot as** The Eidolon, **but unfortunately it involves little more than mastering the controls and then trying to fend off the attacking aliens. Some of the denizens are imaginatively drawn and well animated, but the sound is a bit on the poor side and spoils the atmosphere. If you like your action fast and immediate – try something else.**



Amongst the harmless fish swimming around are aggressive aliens, which must be eradicated. The spears can be used to destroy these aliens, and more importantly, stop them clinging to the edge of the diving bell. Electrifying the hull disposes of any aliens that make it through your defences.

When your supply of spears is exhausted, or energy is low, you can call up to the supply ship for more supplies by using the klaxon – two blasts for fuel, one for ammunition. Supplies are sent down to the bell's current location, which means you have to stay put. However, a stationary craft attracts the attention of a ghastly creature which tries to attach itself to the bell. It can be detached with an electric shock, but if it is left there too long your craft is destroyed.



Following the fish leads you to the source of the alien power – which is where your two bombs come in handy. If things get too hot to handle though, you can always resurface and replenish supplies, before descending once more into the dark depths . . .



Terror of the Deep **has some superficial similarities to** The Eidolon **– mainly because of the Victorian design of the control panel. Sadly, this doesn't have the atmosphere or playability of Lucasfilm's classic game, and after exploring the depths of Loch Ness for a couple of hours, I lost interest. The attention to detail is commendable, but** Terror of the Deep **doesn't offer enough depth (groan) to warrant the price tag.**

PRESENTATION 81%
Neat control system and adequate documentation.

GRAPHICS 65%
Detailed instrument panel, but the sprites are quite crude.

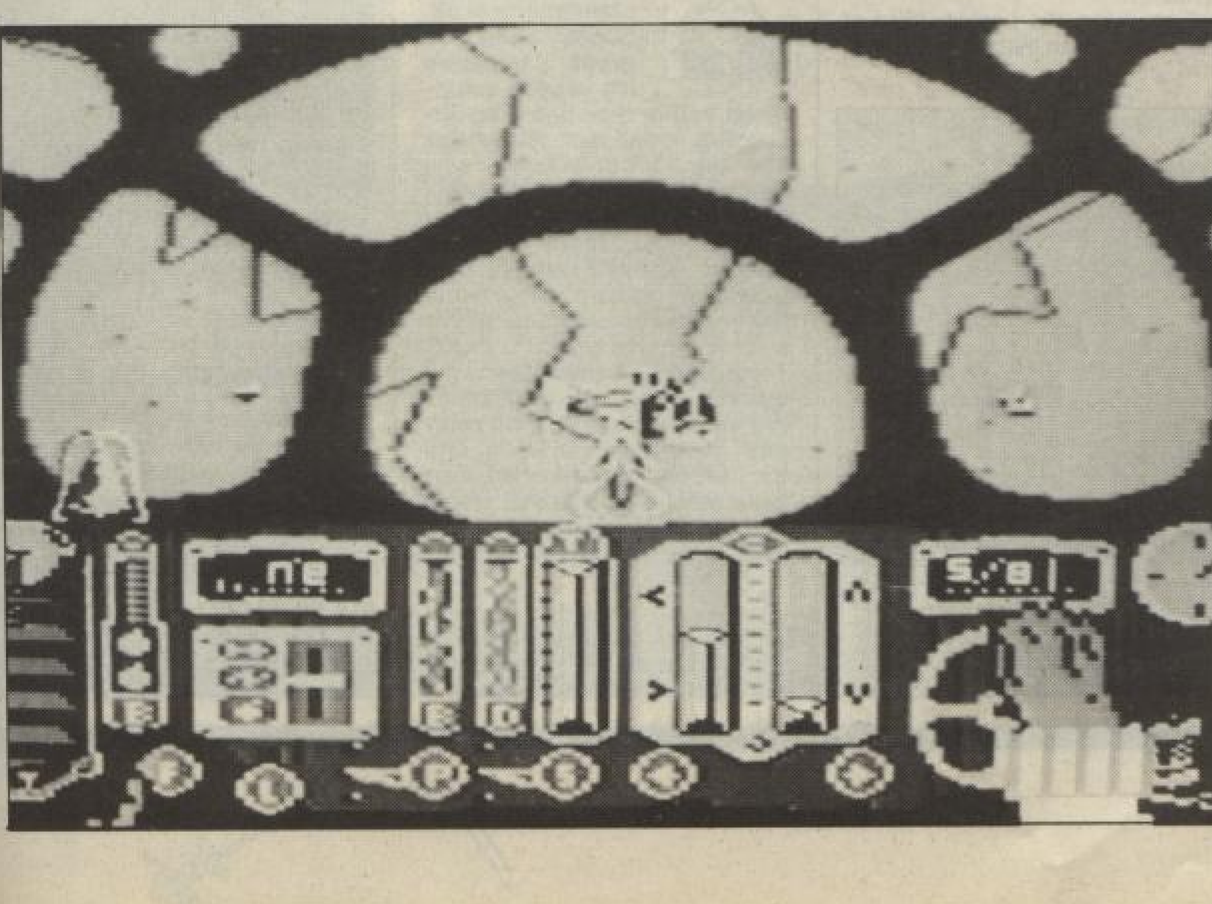
SOUND 33%
Ghastly title tune and weak spot FX.

HOOKABILITY 71%
A bit overwhelming at first, but engrossing enough to be addictive.

LASTABILITY 51%
Atmospheric, but lacking variety.

VALUE 53%
Plenty of depth, but not enough game.

OVERALL 60%
A potentially exciting concept which fails to make the grade.





ZZAP! TEST

TOMAHAWK

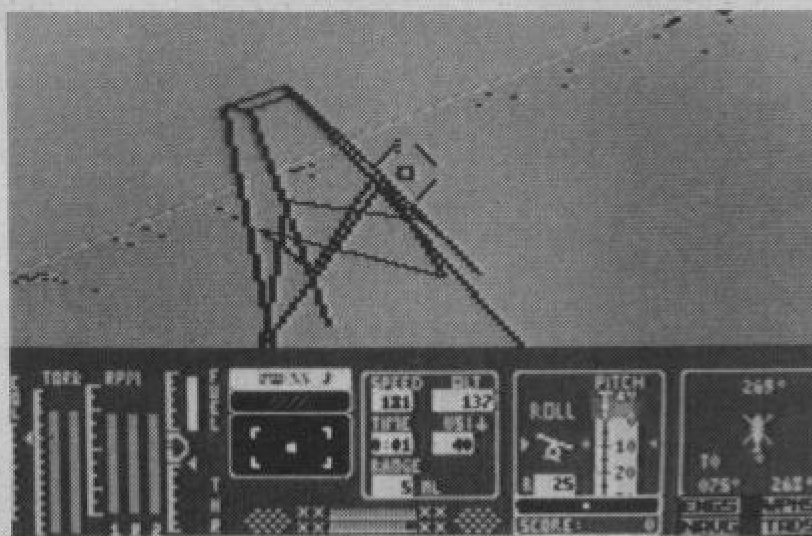
Digital Integration, £9.95 cass, £14.95 disk, joystick with keys

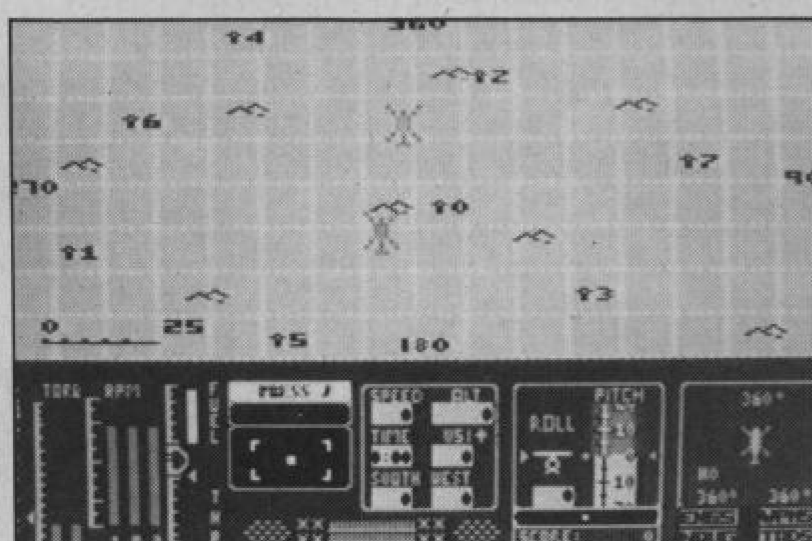
Tomahawk is a flight simulator which puts the player in command of an AH-64A APACHE advanced attack helicopter – claimed by the US Army to be the most deadly helicopter gunship in the world.

The title screen boasts a comprehensive list of options, including four skill levels ranging from trainee to ace. The helicopter may be flown during day or night, with the cockpit view changing to infra-red for night visibility. Weather conditions can also be altered via a Clear or Cloudy option. Cross-winds and turbulence can be added, to make the handling of the helicopter trickier.



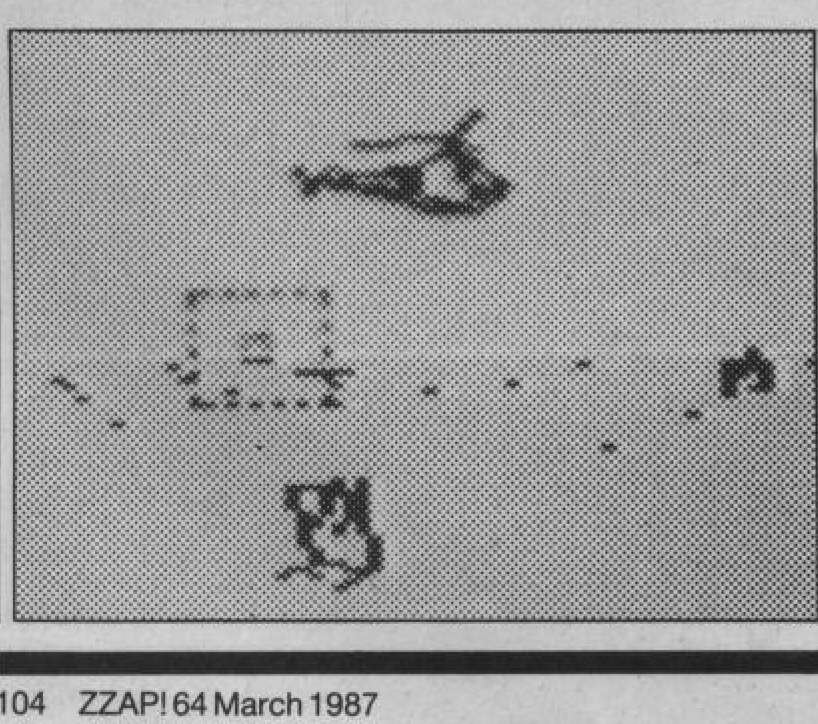
This is definitely an enthusiast's simulation, concentrating exclusively on realism. Consequently, the action isn't immediate and instantly rewarding, and it's actually quite tricky to keep the chopper airborne. The vector graphics aren't very effective, and sometimes it's very difficult to distinguish between objects. Another niggling point is the slow speed at which the screen updates – even at top speed the helicopter seems to be crawling along. However, if you don't mind these minus points Tomahawk **has plenty to keep you glued to your 64. Personally, I would wait to see** Gunship **before making a decision.**





There are four missions of varying difficulty to be completed. The first is a training mission which gives the pilot the opportunity to become familiar with the handling of the chopper, as well as teaching him or her to distinguish between allied and enemy tanks and guns. The other three levels put the pilot in battle situations, ranging from a small attack force to a complete invasion.

Occupying the bottom third of the screen is an instrument panel, covered with all the gauges and dials needed to keep the chopper airborne. The most important function, the 'collective' gauge, is displayed at the left of the panel. This is used to adjust the angle of the rotor blades, thus increasing the amount of lift. Torque gauges lie to its right, indicating the amount of stress put on the engine by the current collective. An audible warning sounds when the torque reaches a dangerous level.





I don't like flight simulations at all. Super Huey **is great because it's arcade orientated, rather than being an 'incredibly realistic' simulator like this. I don't know why people bother producing this type of simulation on home micros – as far as I'm concerned, they're simply not powerful enough to provide the graphic capabilities to give a real impression of flight.** Tomahawk **just strengthens my opinion – the vector graphics are very weak, and don't relay any of the exhilaration and excitement experienced during a real helicopter trip. If this is the case, then it's not really a flight simulation – is it?**

The thrust level is shown as a dial, and above it is a fuel gauge. Speed, altitude, vertical speed in feet per second, time to objective, and distance from objective are all show numerically on a computer VDU on the right.



Tomahawk **is a simulation and consequently doesn't have the playability of** Super Huey, **due to the immense amount of information that has to be taken in at one time – but the work is worth it. The slow screen-update lets the whole thing down a bit, and the control can be a little sluggish, but the overall feel is there. The four missions are basically the same – you simply fly around and blast everything, but it's good to have something to do once you get the hang of flying. Basically** Tomahawk **is a well thought-out flight simulation, with wargame overtones – and I thoroughly recommend it.**

Combat armaments include a target identification read-out, which identifies a target before it becomes fully visible, and a doppler navigation system, which allows the player to navigate and find targets. There are three different weapon types to become familiar with. The Chain Gun, Non-Guided Missiles and Hellfire Guided Missiles.

PRESENTATION 92%
Informative and easy to read instructions, and a series of comprehensive options.

GRAPHICS 71%
Fairly slow and occasionally unclear vector graphics give some impression of flight.

SOUND 56%
Suitable spot FX, although they're rather quiet.

HOOKABILITY 72%
Lots to read before play, but it's relatively straightforward.

LASTABILITY 73%
Four similar missions present plenty of challenge.

VALUE 70%
Considerably cheaper than the real thing!

OVERALL 74%
Adequate fodder for simulation freaks.

TIGER MISSION

Kele Line, £9.95 cass, £14.95 disk, joystick only

Tiger Mission puts you at the controls of the latest in chopper technology. The objective is to negotiate four vertically scrolling levels to reach and destroy an enemy base, which is situated on two aircraft carriers on the final screen.

The helicopter is initially armed with a cannon and one smart bomb – the former is activated by pressing the fire button, while the latter is released via the space bar. The first level consists of a forest landscape, and features spinning mirrors, tanks, gun emplacements, ground-to-air missile launchers, and harmless ground installations – all of which must be destroyed or avoided.

Extra equipment can be picked up along the way, including more powerful missiles, turbo speed, and extra bombs. These additions are hidden under red cross boxes which are dotted around the landscape. Shooting a box reveals the equipment hidden underneath, which is then automatically 'bolted-on' to the helicopter's fuselage. However, some boxes have been booby-trapped, and destroying one of these removes all of your helicopter's extra equipment.

A bonus is displayed at the bottom screen, increasing as you progress – reaching the end of a level earns you the total bonus, which is then added to your score.



Having endured five vertically scrolling shoot 'em ups last month, I'm not overly enthusiastic about seeing another one. There's nothing at all original or innovative about Tiger Mission **– it's just the same old thing with an new name. The pace is slow, and the in-game soundtrack tends to interfere with the action. The landscapes are plain, uninteresting and shallow – even the chopper's shadow doesn't create any feeling of depth. I would have thought that an up and coming new software house would want to make an impact by producing something more original and impressive than this formulaic tedium.**

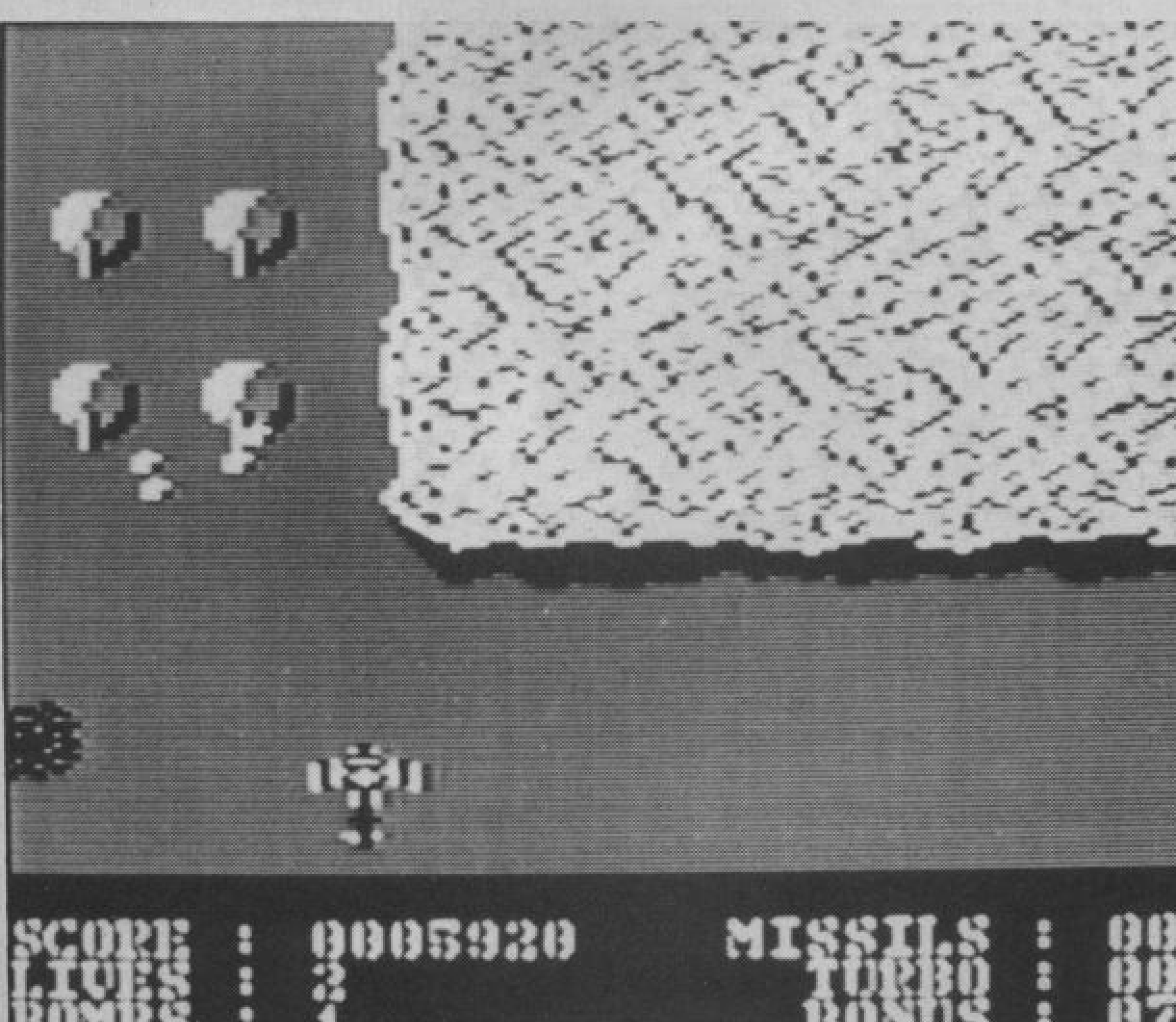


A very simple game hides behind dramatic presentation, and when compared next to another vertically scrolling shoot 'em up like *Alleykat*, you realise that there really isn't much excuse for churning out this sort of monotony. As far as it goes, it's quite addictive, with good graphics, smooth scrolling, and reasonable playability – but it's certainly nothing to write home about.





This is a very slick and glossy piece of programming, but it's a shame that it wasn't used on a more original and exciting game. Tiger Mission **is yet another in a long line of vertically scrolling shoot 'em ups. It's fun to play for a while, but annoying factors like the sluggish speed of the chopper, and having to start a level all over again when you die, give rise to frustration and eventual disinterest. The graphics and sound are very good, and the presentation is excellent – but there's no disguising the limited gameplay. If you're after a vertically scrolling shoot 'em up, I recommend that you take a look at the others before deciding to buy this one.**



PRESENTATION 89%
Very pretty, with some neat programming tricks used to create an exciting look.

GRAPHICS 80%
Very good, although a little bland colour-wise.

SOUND 68%
The soundtrack is good but doesn't really suit the action.

HOOKABILITY 69%
Straightforward, simple and fairly compelling.

LASTABILITY 49%
Only four limited levels to complete.

VALUE 42%
Pricey when compared to games of a similar ilk.

OVERALL 51%
A well-presented, but fairly tame shoot 'em up.

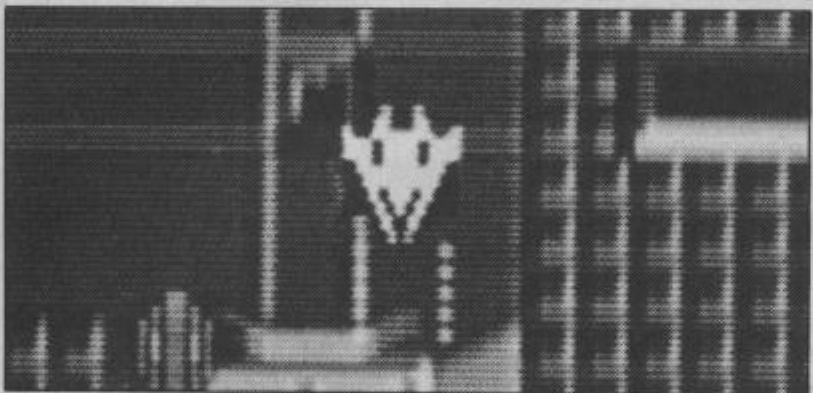


RAID 2000

Mirrorsoft, £9.95 cass, £12.95 disk, joystick only

Earth has been invaded by an evil alien force known as the Xanthidian, who are systematically moving from country to country, wiping out armies, cities and whole populations. However, they haven't yet destroyed four prototype Raider craft – the only things capable of beating them back. The main problem is finding a pilot brave and skilled enough to complete this task. You're welcome to have a crack . . . but do you fit the bill?

At the start of the mission the screen displays a map of Earth, split into 32 sections. In the bottom left hand area of the map there are four icons, representing the Raiders. Only one craft can be moved at a time, with the function keys switching control. Areas occupied by the aliens are shown in purple, and those under human command are green.





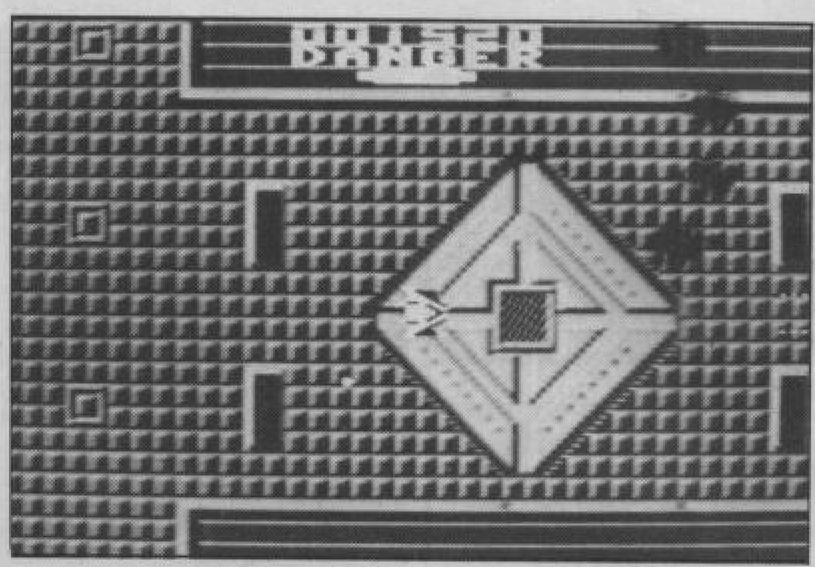
Gosh! It's the year 2000 and Earth is under threat from alien invasion . . . Yawn – how many times have I heard this one before. This is a barely average multi-directional scrolling shoot 'em up, and I didn't find very appealing. The game-play is fast, but fairly monotonous. It involves little more than flying around samey scenery, shooting reactors and aliens, and nuking a continent – or two. I'd give this a miss – the uninspiring game-play doesn't justify the high price.

A text read-out at the bottom of the screen gives details of each area, and indicates whether there is an active alien reactor plant present. These reactors generate alien craft, which have to be destroyed before the remaining aliens can be picked off at leisure.

The Raiders travel from area to area, destroying reactors and the occupying aliens. To visit a trouble spot, the player moves a ship to the desired section on the map and presses the fire button. The screen then changes to display a scrolling aerial view of the landscape, with the ship in the centre. Your primary target is the reactor – a flashing building hidden somewhere in the landscape. After this has been destroyed, the remaining aliens can be eliminated, allowing you to return to the map screen.

Should the aliens spread too fast, a thermonuclear device can be dropped on an occupied zone. Each Raider carries one of these bombs, which is capable of wiping out everything in the target area.

Having been driven from Earth, the aliens regroup and attack again, and a new complement of Raiders is given. The mission ends when all four Raider craft are lost, or the aliens take over the Raider's base.





This is an enjoyable shoot 'em up, but it tends to become a bit dull after only a little play. The map screen is quite a good idea, and forces you think where to go next – but the action becomes rather repetitive. It's basically a very simple version of Time Pilot 84**, with rather samey backdrops. The graphics and sound are fair, but I don't think there's enough action involved to warrant the ten quid price tag.**



It's a shame that Raid 2000 **is nothing more than a glorified multi-directional scrolling shoot 'em up – it had the potential to be something different, and consequently a lot better. To be fair, the programmers have attempted to introduce some new features – but none of them are particularly inspired. There's not much else to say about** Raid 2000**, other than it's just another expensive, run-of-the-mill shoot 'em up.**



PRESENTATION 85%
Good instructions, and polished in-game presentation.

GRAPHICS 67%
Good bas-relief backdrops and competent sprites.

SOUND 52%
Reasonable title tune and suitable spot effects.

HOOKABILITY 61%
Deceptively easy to get into, although completing the task is pretty difficult.

LASTABILITY 50%
Becomes repetitive after a short while – there's not much variation in the gameplay and graphics.

VALUE 47%
Not enough variety or innovative action to warrant the expensive price tag.

OVERALL 56%
A fairly poor *Time Pilot 84* clone with an attractive front end.

'sounds rude...!'

STAR SOLDIER

Quicksilva, £8.95 cass, joystick only

Star Soldier – that's your job description. It sounds glamorous, but in reality you're a bounty hunter, selling your services to the highest bidder. You're usually hired to wipe out unwanted criminals and dangerous organisations. The job involves travelling from planet to planet and taking on armies of villains single-handedly. It's a tough life, but a profitable one if the missions undertaken are completed successfully.

Mission control consists of a split-screen computer – the upper half is a star map and the lower half a display panel which features a series of icons, along with your cash total and present status. Using the icons you can load up your utility belt (used to carry equipment into battle) with up to twenty-nine weapons: grenades, smart bombs, explosives, extra energy and escape units are available in limited quantities. All have a price, and money is deducted from your total as each item is bought.

Everything that a Star Soldier does costs money – even promotions can be bought and sold! Changing rank can make sound economic sense however, as jobs pay more for those in higher positions.

When the equipping routine is complete, the status panel can be changed to show a computer VDU with four labelled icons above it: Jobs, Exam, Move and Go. Selecting MOVE accesses a cursor in the centre of the upper screen and the map can be scrolled around it. Pressing the fire button selects whichever star or planet is in the proximity of the cursor, with a text read-out on the VDU giving details of the type of jobs available there.

Selecting the JOBS icon reveals the difficulty and objective of the mission in question – and the reward for completing it. A job is undertaken by selecting the GO icon. At this point, the screen changes to display an aerial view of your bounty hunter and his surroundings. As he moves across the landscape, the screen scrolls horizontally from left to right. Enemy soldiers emerge from all sides of the screen and attack, firing bullets in an attempt to do damage to the intruder.

Your energy status is displayed at the bottom of the screen as a diminishing bar – carrying an Energy Pod automatically replenishes lost energy when the bar reaches zero. If no pod is being carried however, total energy loss is fatal and the game ends.

A gun is the best method of defence as it fires an unlimited supply of bullets – the finite supply of smart bombs, grenades and explosives have to be used far more sparingly. Every so often shooting or blowing up an enemy soldier reveals an object which can be picked up – these include Extra Money, Temporary Immunity from enemy bullets and Extra Energy Pods.

The objective is to keep moving left until you reach the end of the landscape, whereupon a congratulatory message is given along with a cash bonus. The screen then reverts to mission control, where another job can be chosen.



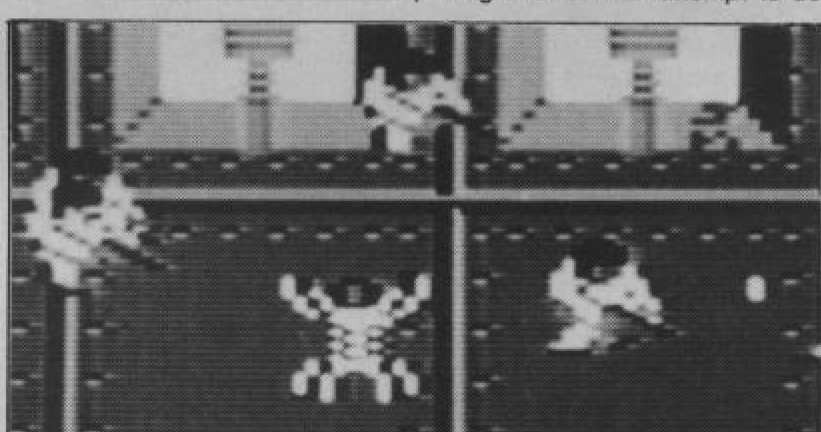
Question: What did Quicksilva get when they crossed Commando **with a sprinkling of** Elite**? Answer: a less than mediocre game called** Star Soldier**... Theoretically,** Star Soldier **had potential – but unfortunately the programmer has fouled up badly. The program is riddled with annoying bugs that spoil the gameplay, which is already fairly slow and tedious. The graphics can only be described as fair – the characters are basic, but the playing area scrolls well and is adequately detailed. The sound is quite good, even though the title screen music doesn't really go with the macho mercenary image. There are too many bugs in this for it to be any fun to play – I wouldn't recommend** Star Soldier **at all.**

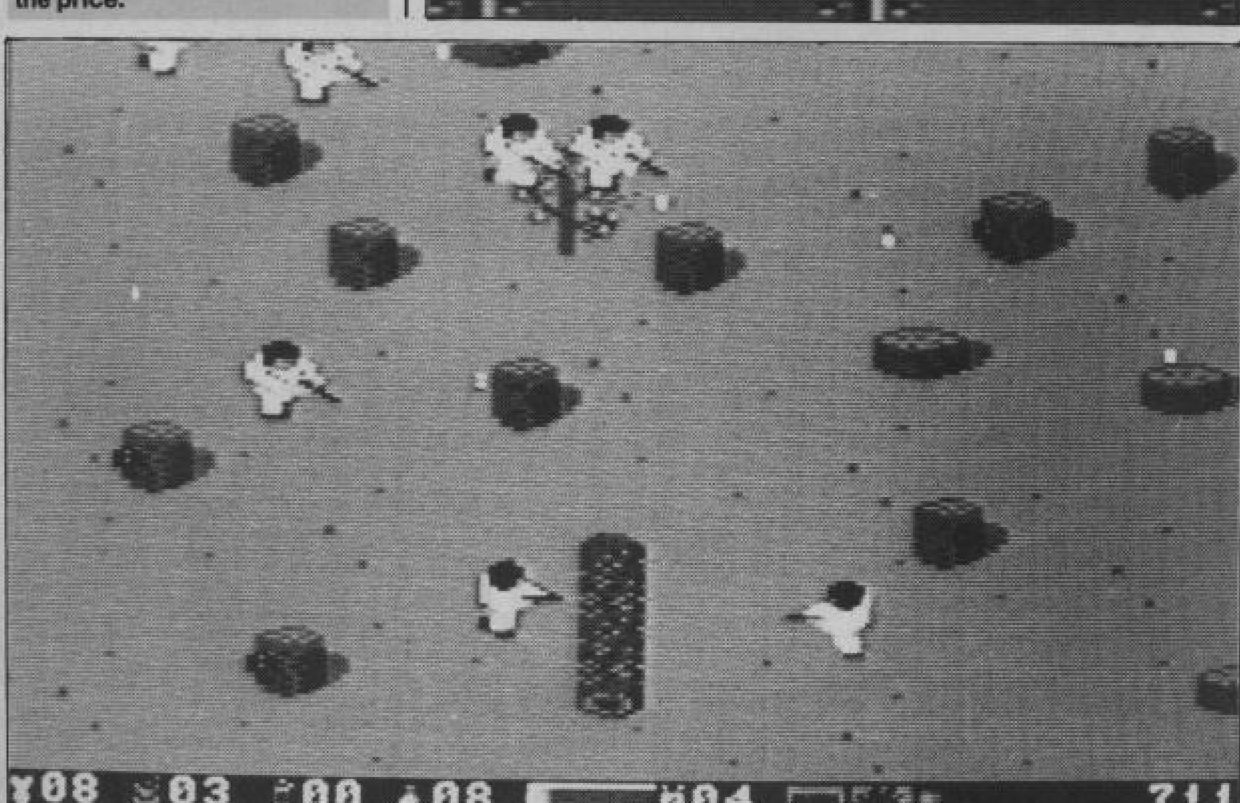


Star Soldier **would have been a good game if it was considerably faster and there was more to do than run around shooting a few enemy soldiers. It's essentially a slower, horizontally scrolling version of** Commando**, but with less action and thrills. The programmer has introduced a few new elements – such as the ability to choose missions and weaponry – but on the whole there aren't enough original or outstanding features to warrant a purchase, especially at the price.**



This is basically a very slow, horizontally scrolling Commando **with an unnecessary front-end and many faults. One of its main flaws is that you're supposed to start with the easy jobs first and work your way up to the more difficult ones. In practice you can go straight onto the most difficult ones and complete them with ease. Gameplay is extremely slow and repetitive and there is a stupid bug which lets you walk over walls and objects – just keep your finger on the fire button and move the joystick left. The worst of the lot is that the program crashes quite regularly for no reason at all. The graphics and sound are also poor and the price is way over the top.**





PRESENTATION 78%
Reasonable icon system and instructions.

GRAPHICS 48%
Average backdrops and sprites.

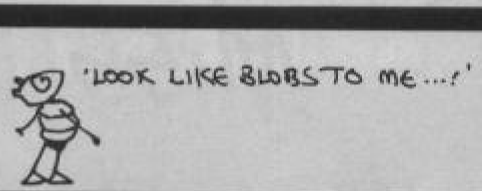
SOUND 45%
Poor title screen tune but functional sound effects.

HOOKABILITY 41%
Simple and slow shoot 'em up action which fails to captivate.

LASTABILITY 34%
Not enough variety or thrills to entertain.

VALUE 33%
Well over the odds for a below average game.

OVERALL 40%
Little more than a sub-standard *Commando* clone.



WHATEVER YOUR STAR SIGN... THE FUTURE HOLDS EXCITEMENT



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GREMLIN

ZZAP! READERS' C

GAMES TOP 30

1 *(3)* **WORLD GAMES** *(14%)*
US Gold/Epyx, £9.99 cass, £14.99 disk
ZZAP! Overall Rating: 98%

2 *(1)* **LEADER BOARD** *(12%)*
US Gold/Access, £9.95 cass, £14.95 disk
ZZAP! Overall Rating: 97%

3 *(2)* **SUPER CYCLE** *(8%)*
US Gold/Epyx, £9.99 cass, £14.99 disk
ZZAP! Overall Rating: 95%

4 *(5)* **GHOSTS 'N' GOBLINS** *(6%)*
Elite, £9.95 cass, £14.95 disk
ZZAP! Overall Rating: 97%

5 *(4)* **GREEN BERET** *(6%)*
Imagine, £8.95 cass
ZZAP! Overall Rating: 93%

6 *(7)* **INTERNATIONAL KARATE** *(3%)*
System 3, £6.50 cass, £10.99 disk
ZZAP! Overall Rating: 91%

7 *(10)* **ALLEYKAT** *(3%)*
Hewson, £8.95 cass, £12.95 disk
ZZAP! Overall Rating: 89%

8 *(8)* **SANXION** *(3%)*
Thalamus, £9.95 cass, £14.95 disk
ZZAP! Overall Rating: 93%

9 *(11)* **URIDIUM** *(2%)*
Hewson, £8.95 cass, £12.95 disk
ZZAP! Overall Rating: 94%

10 *(6)* **PARALLAX** *(2%)*
Ocean, £8.95 cass
ZZAP! Overall Rating: 93%

11 *(9)* **DAN DARE**
Virgin, £9.95 cass, £14.95 disk
ZZAP! Overall Rating: 94%

12 *(-)* **GAUNTLET**
US Gold, £9.99 cass, £14.99 disk
ZZAP! Overall Rating: 93%

13 *(17)* **THE SACRED ARMOUR OF ANTIRIAD**
Palace Software, £8.95 cass
ZZAP! Overall Rating: 93%

14 *(14)* **PARADROID**
Hewson, £7.95 cass, £12.95 disk
ZZAP! Overall Rating: 97%

15 *(20)* **DRUID**
Firebird, £7.95 cass
ZZAP! Overall Rating: 88%

16 *(16)* **1942**
Elite, £9.95 cass, £14.95 disk
ZZAP! Overall Rating: 58%

17 *(12)* **KNIGHT GAMES**
English Software, £8.95 cass, £12.95 disk
ZZAP! Overall Rating: 90%

18 *(-)* **THE SENTINEL**
Firebird, £9.95 cass, £14.95 disk
ZZAP! Overall Rating: N/A

19 *(18)* **SUMMER GAMES II**
US Gold/Epyx, £9.95 cass, £14.95 disk
ZZAP! Overall Rating: 97%

20 *(21)* **WINTER GAMES**
US Gold/Epyx, £9.95 cass, £14.95 disk
ZZAP! Overall Rating: 94%

21 *(26)* **IRIDIS ALPHA**
Hewson, £8.95 cass, £12.95 disk
ZZAP! Overall Rating: 95%

22 *(21)* **THRUST**
Firebird, £1.99 cass
ZZAP! Overall Rating: 94%

23 *(13)* **FIST II**
Melbourne House, £9.95 cass, £14.95 disk
ZZAP! Overall Rating: 39%

24 *(23)* **INFILTRATOR**
US Gold, £9.99 cass, £14.99 disk
ZZAP! Overall Rating: 91%

25*(25)* **MERCENARY**
Novagen, £9.95 cass, £12.95 disk
ZZAP! Overall Rating: 98%

26 *(-)* **AVENGER**
Gremlin Graphics, £9.95 cass, £14.95 disk
ZZAP! Overall Rating: 86%

27 *(27)* **BOULDERDASH CONTRUCTION KIT**
Databyte, £9.95 cass, £14.95 disk
ZZAP! Overall Rating: 97%

28 *(29)* **ELITE**
Firebird, £14.95 cass, £17.95 disk
ZZAP! Overall Rating: 95%

29 *(-)* **FLASH GORDON**
Mastertronic, £2.99 cass
ZZAP! Overall Rating: 89%

30 *(-)* **SPACE HARRIER**
Elite, £9.95 cass, £14.95 disk
ZZAP! Overall Rating: 45%



HARTS

MARCH 1987

MUSIC TOP 10

1 *(8)* **SANXION**
Thalamus
Loading Music (Rob Hubbard)

2 *(1)* **KNUCKLEBUSTERS**
Melbourne House
Main Theme (Rob Hubbard)

3 *(4)* **PARALLAX**
Ocean
Title Screen Music (Martin Galway)

4 *(-)* **INTERNATIONAL KARATE**
System 3
Main Theme (Rob Hubbard)

5 *(3)* **MIAMI VICE**
Ocean
'Title Screen' Music (Martin Galway)

6 *(-)* **GHOSTS 'N' GOBLINS**
Elite
Main Theme (Mark Cooksey)

7 *(-)* **RAMBO**
Ocean
Main Theme (Martin Galway)

8 *(-)* **WARHAWK**
Firebird
Main Theme (Rob Hubbard)

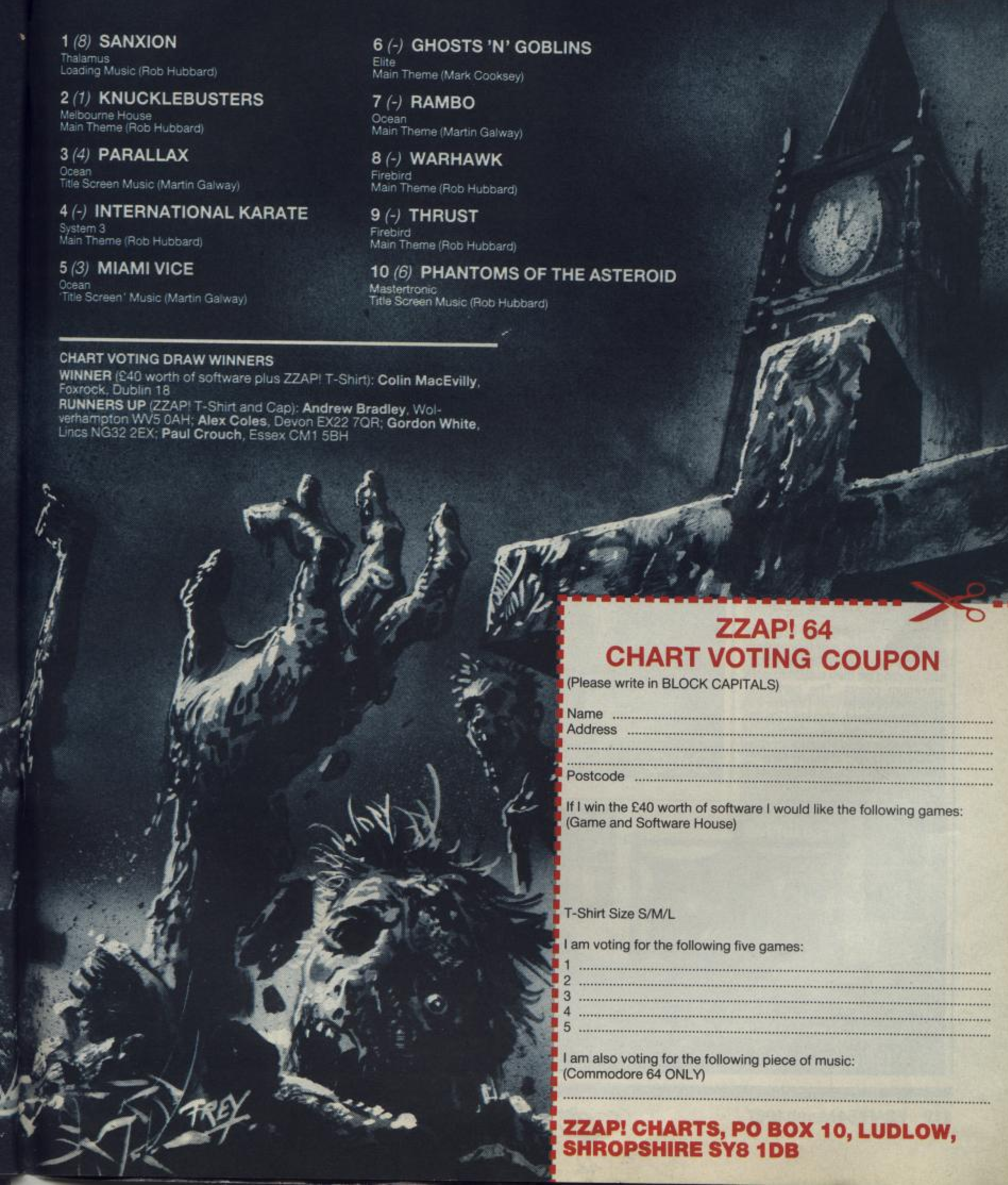
9 *(-)* **THRUST**
Firebird
Main Theme (Rob Hubbard)

10 *(6)* **PHANTOMS OF THE ASTEROID**
Mastertronic
Title Screen Music (Rob Hubbard)

CHART VOTING DRAW WINNERS

WINNER (£40 worth of software plus ZZAP! T-Shirt): **Colin MacEvilly**, Foxrock, Dublin 18

RUNNERS UP (ZZAP! T-Shirt and Cap): **Andrew Bradley**, Wolverhampton WV5 0AH; **Alex Coles**, Devon EX22 7QR; **Gordon White**, Lincs NG32 2EX; **Paul Crouch**, Essex CM1 5BH



ZZAP! 64
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TEST

BLOOD 'N' GUTS

American Action, £9.95 cass, £14.95 disk, joystick only

Back in the days of old, before Eastenders and computer games, barbarians had their own form of entertainment. Their favourite pastime was competing in a rather violent version of the decathlon, and American Action's *Blood 'n' Guts* attempts to simulate these grisly games.

Either one or two players can play, each taking the role of one of four barbarians. Both options are played head to head, with a computer opponent taking the absent human's place in the one-player version.

The first event is the TUG OF WAR. Two armoured barbarians stand on different sides of a river bank, connected to one another by a piece of rope. The object is simple – waggle the joystick as fast as possible to give your man the strength to pull his opponent into the water.



I found Blood 'n' Guts **quite absorbing at first, mainly because I haven't played this sort of game for a long time. It's also quite sick, which adds to the initial fun. However, after an hour or so of frenetic and strenuous waggling I soon grew tired – and bored of the whole thing. We've seen it all before, and if we're going to see it all again it ought to be at a budget price.**

TOWER JUMP is an event in which barbarians hurl themselves from the top of a tall tower, hopefully landing on their heads to gain maximum points. The barbarian who manages to hurl himself the furthest distance, and land on his head, is declared the winner.

After that head-masher comes ROCK ROLLER, a frantic race to push a large rock to the top of a hill . . . then down the other side to squash the opposition. Waggling from left to right builds up energy, and when enough is amassed the rock pusher starts shunting.

BEER DRINKING is next. Swift left and right movements of the joystick make the barbarian swig, although care must be taken not to go too fast – otherwise he throws up and loses the game. The fastest drinker over three rounds is declared the winner.

HUMAN HIT is a target practice game with a difference. A peasant has been locked in stocks with his head, hands and feet exposed. The barbarian must hit all five 'targets' with large rocks – aimed with a cursor, and launched by pressing the fire button . . . ouch!

POLE FIGHTING takes place on a greasy log, where the combatants attempt to club each other off. The winner is the first to send his opponent tumbling twice.

What next but CAT THROWING? A simple event in which you have to throw a moggy as far as possible. Pressing the fire button sends the barbarian spinning, and repeating the action releases the ill-fated feline. The faster the barbarian spins, the further the cat is thrown, but speed reduces accuracy.



Who's a sick little programmer? Blood 'n' Guts **is appealing for an hour or so, but not much longer. Most of the events are tasteless variations of sections already contained in other** Decathlon **type games (except of course the novel beer-drinking contest). The graphics are neat and the characters well animated, though a little extra detail wouldn't go amiss. If you're a fan of 'joystick wagglers', and can stand the multi-load, then** Blood 'n' Guts **will make a change from the usual** Track and Field **type of simulation.**

Don't be misled by the innocent title of MOUNTAIN WALK. A rope has been stretched between two mountain peaks, with the opponents at either end. The object of the event is to get to the middle of the rope and knock the other player off by jumping up and down. The player who falls twice loses the event.

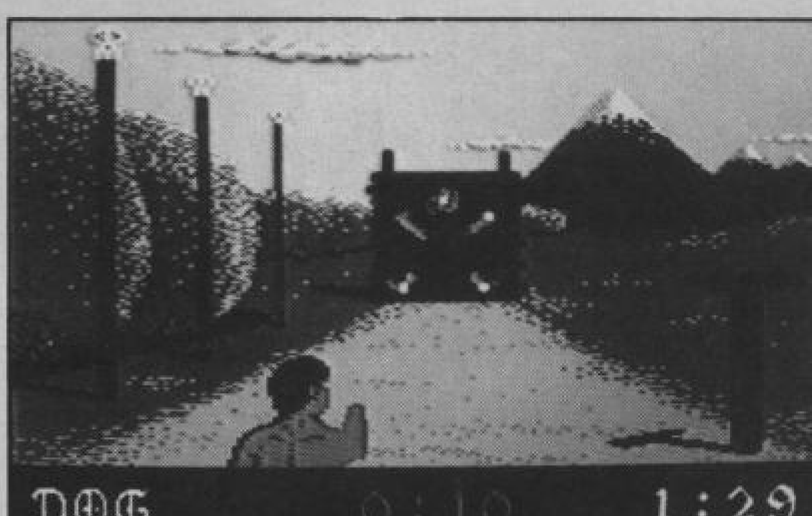


AXE THROWING is simple, the barbarians meet and try to bury the hatchet – into each other. The joystick is used to aim and the fire button lobs the weapon.

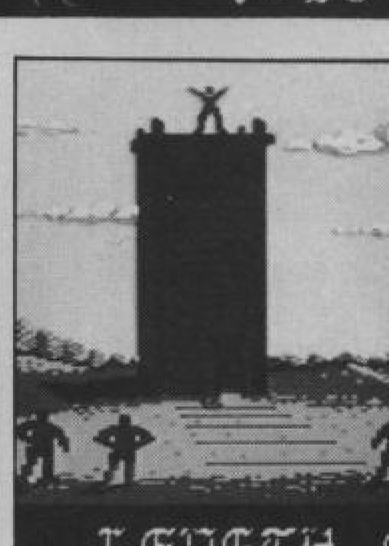
The final event is the ARM WRECK, an arm-wrestling competition which requires you to waggle the joystick as fast as possible to beat your opponent. The first to beat his opponent twice wins the event. The winner of the most events is the victor – and the loser gets his 'just rewards' in a final head-chopping screen.



This contains many nice touches and humorous situations, but unfortunately nearly all the events are a variation on the age-old Decathlon **joystick-wobbling theme. Another minus point is the multi-load system – some of the events take very little time to complete, and therefore more time is spent loading than playing. Both the graphics and sound are pretty good, but it's a shame that they're let down by the limited gameplay. Nevertheless,** Blood 'n' Guts **is a vast improvement on the last three American Action releases – let's hope the trend continues.**







PRESENTATION 64%
A one or two player option, and a painful multi-load system.

GRAPHICS 78%
Colourful and occasionally imaginative, with a pleasant overall effect.

SOUND 63%
Some short but bearable tunes, and a few simple spot effects.

HOOKABILITY 69%
Simplistic joystick waggling action offers immediate playability.

LASTABILITY 46%
Dated and rather limited gameplay which lacks variety.

VALUE 49%
Expensive for ten run-of-the-mill events.

OVERALL 56%
A mediocre variant of a tried and tested theme.





FALCON PATROL II

Bug Byte, £2.99 cass, joystick only

The war in the Middle East isn't going too well. Enemy helicopter gunships are attacking in droves, and the only thing standing between them and victory is you and a squadron of five Harrier Jump-jets. There are no more pilots left, so it's up to you to take the jets up one by one and battle the enemy fleet, shooting down as many of them as you can.

The action takes place over a two-way horizontally scrolling landscape, beneath which a radar is situated. There are three types of enemy helicopter: solo, gunship and unarmed transporter. The former pair track the Harrier under your control, firing air-to-air missiles when you come into range. Unarmed transporters don't shoot, but move around the landscape dropping anti-aircraft guns and radar jammers. If any of these (or their missiles) hit the Harrier, it bursts into flames and crashes to the ground, reducing the squadron by one.

The Harrier isn't unarmed though, and can fire air-to-air missiles in two directions: straight ahead or diagonally towards the ground. This supply of missiles is limited, and must be replenished at regular intervals. Re-arming is carried out on any one of the eight platforms which lie across the landscape. Fuel is expended while flying and can be replenished in a similar fashion – running out of fuel during flight causes the Harrier to stall and crash. An added problem is that these platforms can be destroyed if you accidentally shoot them twice. Correct identification of targets is therefore imperative, as re-fuelling is impossible when all of your bases are destroyed.

The enemy attack in squadrons – the first five consisting of eight helicopters, those thereafter consisting of twelve. The enemy progressively increases in speed and 'intelligence', making their squadrons more difficult to destroy. There is one consolation though – an extra Harrier is awarded for shooting down five squadrons.



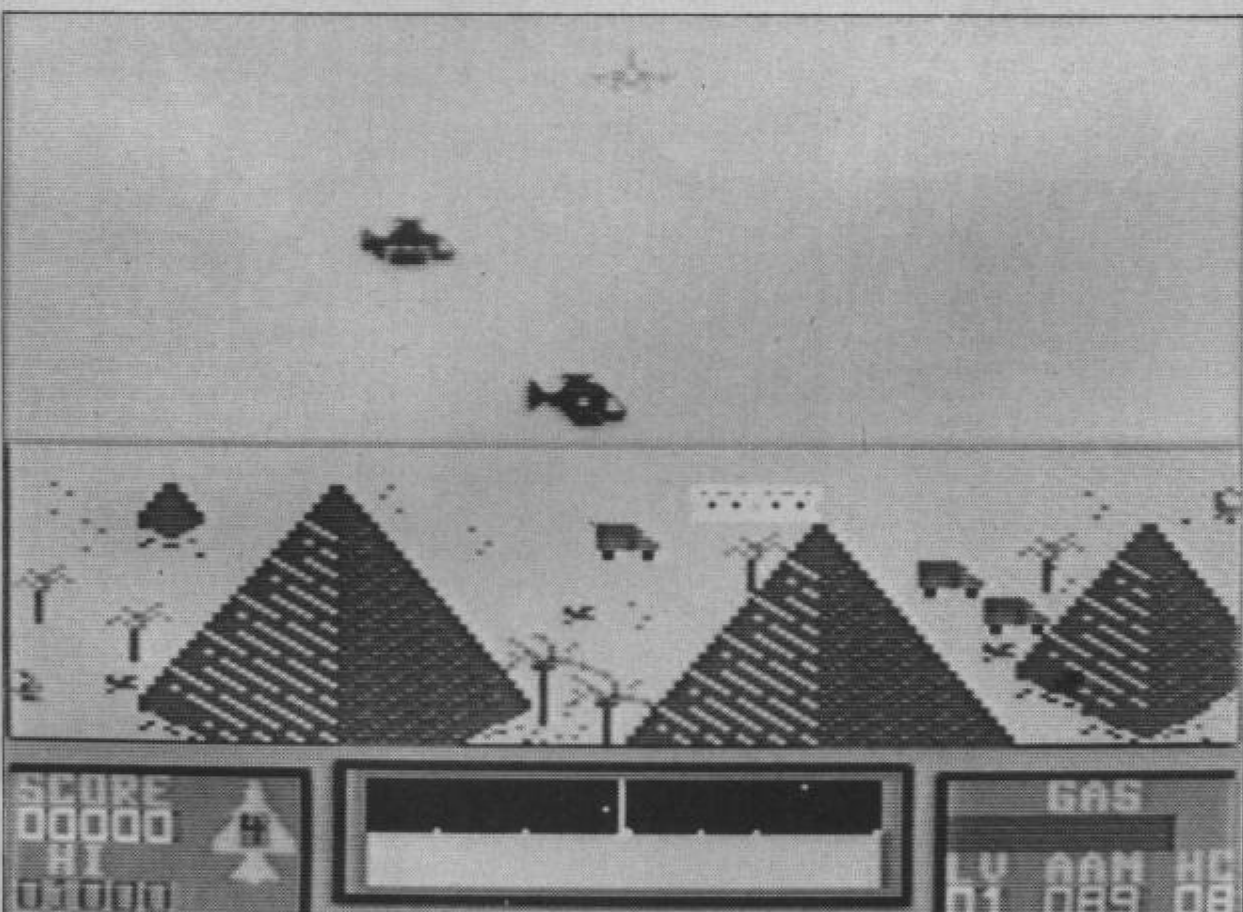
Falcon Patrol II **is a welcome blast from the past. It's aurally competent and graphically reasonable – the landscape is quite coarse, but the helicopters look okay and move well enough.** Falcon Patrol II **isn't outstanding and doesn't offer anything new, but it is rather addictive (frustrating at times, but very playable) – and sensibly priced for what it offers.**

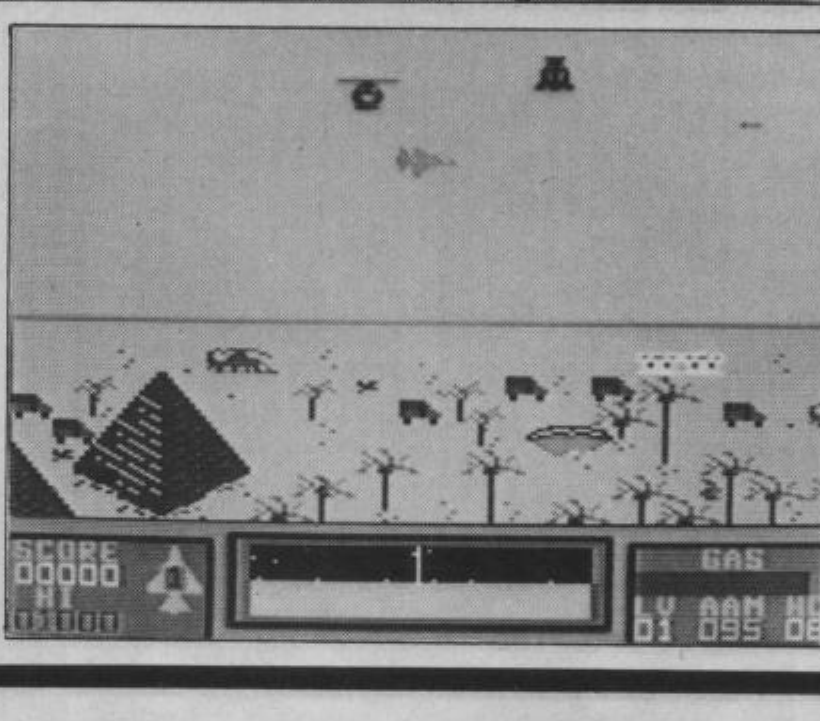


This might be a bit old, but it's just as much fun to play now as it was when it first came out. There are some very frustrating points however, like the length of time it takes to re-arm and re-fuel and the lack of a restart option. Also, the graphics are a bit on the naff side, and the title tune is terrible – but Falcon Patrol II **is great fun to play. The action does get a mite repetitive after a while, but it's sensibly priced at three quid and well worth looking up – especially if you're into shoot 'em ups.**



Falcon Patrol II **never received the honour of a** ZZAP! **review during its heyday, for the simple reason that we weren't around. In its time it was well above average in most respects – now however, it doesn't really look or play quite so well. The gameplay is mildly compulsive, but things get a bit irritating if you foul up your first couple of lives. The graphics are not too hot – the characters are badly drawn and the scrolling is awful. The sound is average, the title screen tune is tedious and the effects are bearable – but far from excellent. Generally this isn't a great piece of programming, but it does play well and offers excellent value at only three quid.**





PRESENTATION 80%
Slick attract mode and in-game instructions.

GRAPHICS 64%
Wobbly scrolling and single colour sprites, but they depict the action well enough.

SOUND 63%
Rather 'tinny' title tune, but the spot effects are good.

HOOKABILITY 79%
Instantly enjoyable blasting action.

LASTABILITY 54%
Repetitive but quite playable.

VALUE 78%
Plenty of action for three quid.

OVERALL 63%
A cheap, limited, but enjoyable shoot 'em up.

ZUB

Mastertronic, £2.99 cass, joystick or keys

Oh dear! A thief has stolen King Zub's most prized possession, 'The Eyeball of Zub', and hidden it on a planet called Zub Ten. The King is pretty cheesed-off by this and has ordered you, Sergeant Zub of the Navigation Corps, to go and retrieve it.

The route to Zub Ten is via the ancient Zub Teleport system. Each of the ten planets in the Zub planetary system has three teleporters hovering a mile or so above the atmosphere – the only way they can be reached is by negotiating a series of floating platforms which sit at different altitudes. By moving one platform left or right until it sits under the platform above, Zub can jump up until he reaches the penultimate platform. When Zub is safely sitting on this he has a choice of jumping onto three teleporting platforms, each leading to another planet in the Zub system. The objective is to get to Zub Ten, where 'The Eyeball of Zub' can be picked up.



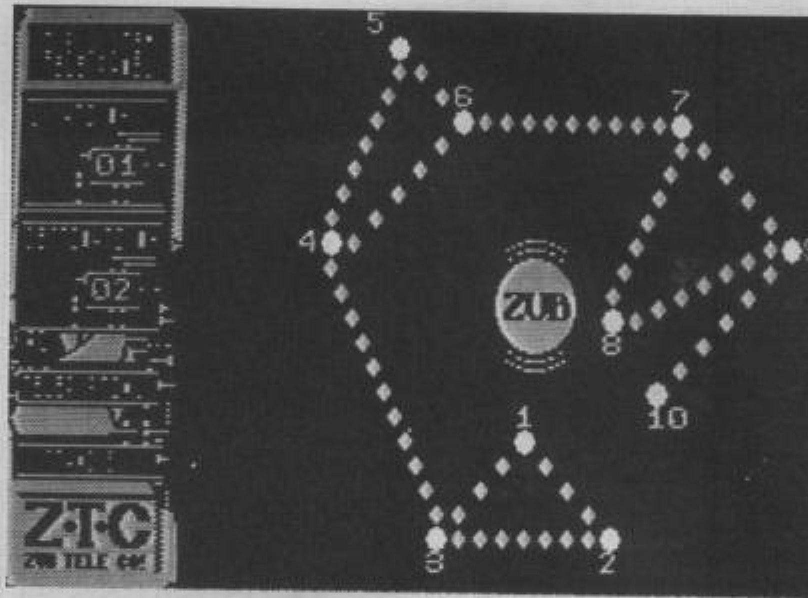
Zub **is quite a strange game – I suppose the best comparison would be to say that it's like a vertical** Frogger**. It's great fun to play, compulsive and addictive, but I can't say exactly why – it's just one of those games which you just can't put down until you've got it sussed. The presentation is good, with a somewhat confusing title screen that leads very neatly into the game itself. Don't expect to get bowled over by it – just sit back and enjoy it for what it's worth.**





Zub **is well presented, graphically sparse, aurally reasonable, and very dull. I quickly became bored as all it involves is jumping up from platform to platform, occasionally shooting security robots – very tedious. Also, it's possible to start the game by pressing the fire button – even though the input is set to keyboard. This proves most annoying, especially as the input always defaults to keyboard! I wouldn't recommend Zub, even at this low price.**

Planet guardians make the task more difficult by homing in on Zub and trying to push him off the platforms. Contact with a guardian reduces Zub's vital energy, so a careful watch must be kept on his on-screen energy bar. Fortunately, his energy can be replenished after teleporting – a screen is displayed with seven energy pills of differing strengths. Pressing the space bar selects whichever pill is flashing, and the appropriate amount of energy is added to the bar.

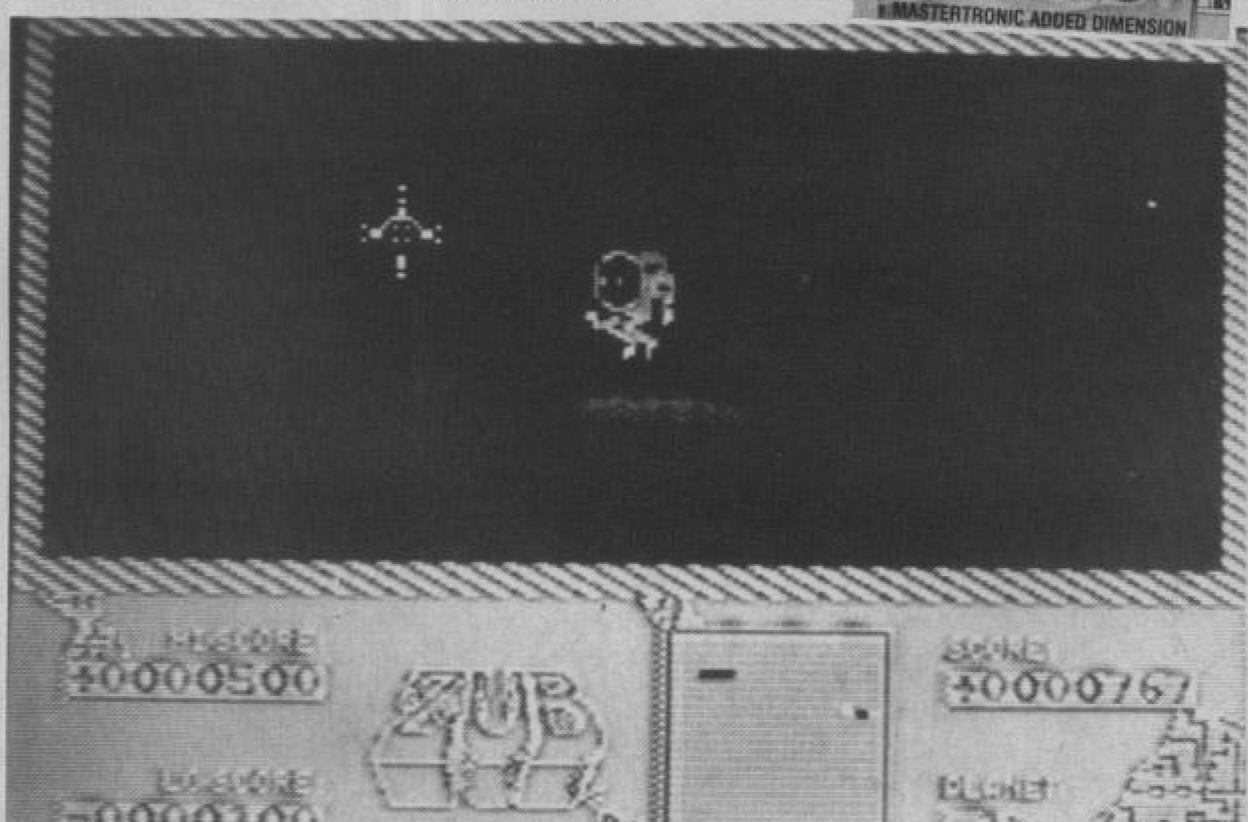


Zub isn't defenceless and can shoot at the guardians, forcing them to fly to the top of the playing area for a couple of seconds. The guardians' position (in relation to Zub) can be monitored by the radar, situated at the bottom of the screen. As Zub gets nearer to Zub Ten the guardians become increasingly aggressive, making it trickier to get to the teleporters.





Originality is this program's strong point – it fails in its graphics, sound and playability. The big problem is that it's incredibly boring – there's nothing more to the game than leaping up from platform to platform, trying to get to the top of the screen, avoiding the horrible creature which tries to kill you in the process. The tune which plays throughout is downright annoying and the graphics are bland and don't really add anything at all. Okay, so the program might be only a couple of quid, but when compared to the likes of Park Patrol **there's just no comparison.**



PRESENTATION 78%
Pleasant enough title screen and in-game presentation. Annoying flaw where control always defaults to keyboard.

GRAPHICS 47%
Minimal – but what's there is reasonable.

SOUND 62%
Two suitable tunes and a few mediocre spot FX.

HOOKABILITY 63%
Mildly addictive with a straightforward objective.

LASTABILITY 35%
Too dull and repetitive to have any great lasting appeal.

VALUE 49%
Cheap – but not overly cheerful.

OVERALL 38%
A glamorous but tedious clone of *Frogger*.

BELIEVE ME...THERE IS ONLY ONE WAY TO BEAT THE





I took on the Mutants knowing I was armed to the teeth with missiles, mines, torpedoes and more... I could even choose where I wanted to fight! How could I loose? ...How DID I loose? I've never seen anything like it... they came at me in droves, in swirling gases, in forms spinning a deadly gossamer and there were more to come. I know now that one form of Mutant will never escape a well planned pattern of mines. It's just the beginning... but I must build the ultimate weapon or I'll NEVER be rid of them all!

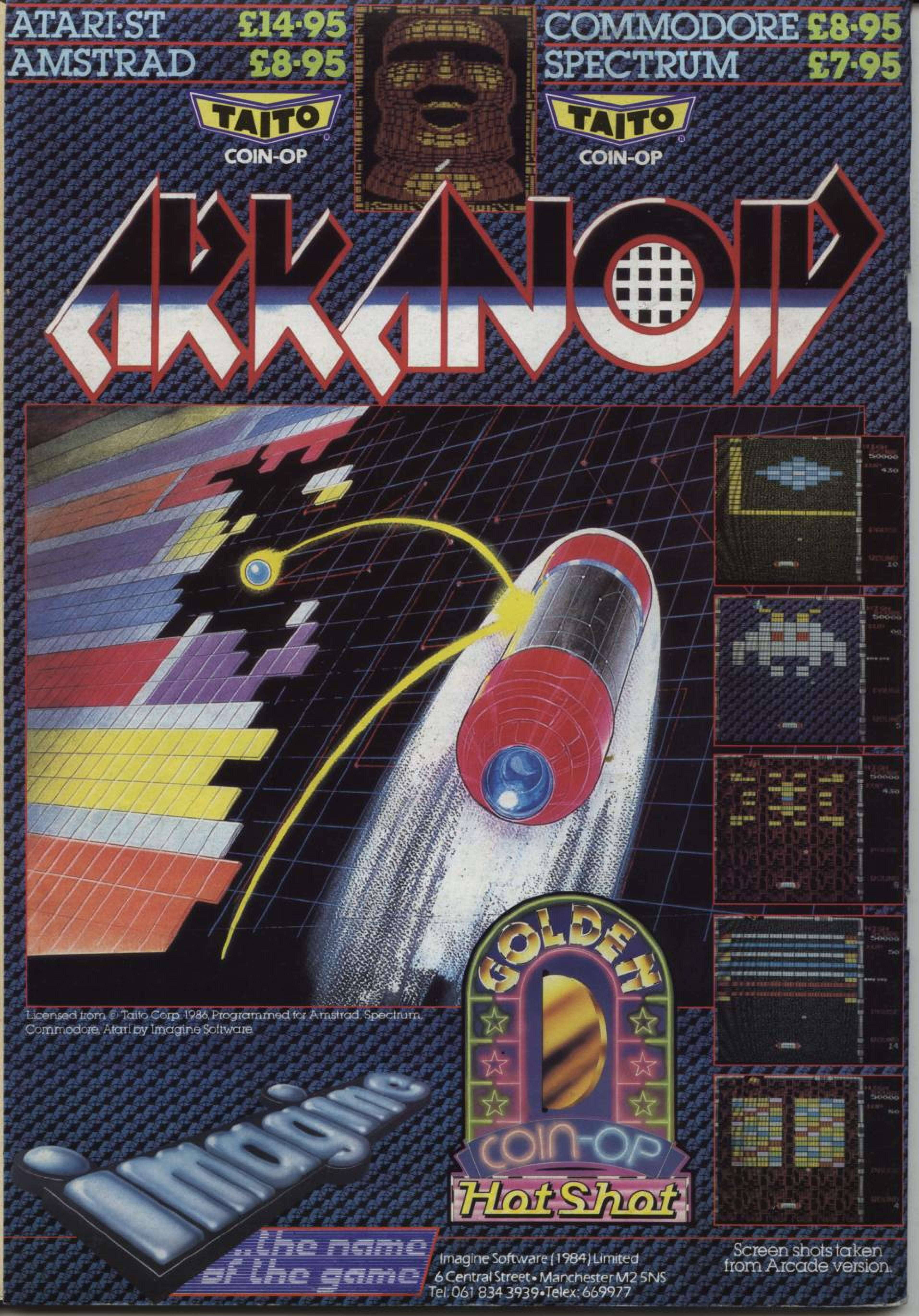


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Screen shots taken from Arcade version.